

SECTION TWO

PRINCESS PRIME TIME
David Aaronovitch on the making of 'Dianarama'

MARTIN SCORSESE
Talks about de Niro, the Mob and movies

SIX PAGES OF GRADUATE APPOINTMENTS

WIN A SKI HOLIDAY IN COLORADO

Plus K2 skis and snowboards to be won, see page 30

Queen's Speech is overshadowed by rise in unemployment and fall in retail sales

Economy blights Tory relaunch

DONALD MACINTYRE and PAUL WALLACE

Fresh signs of weakness in the economy yesterday blunted the impact of the Government's legislative programme announced in the Queen's Speech, and put even greater pressure on Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to use this month's budget as the launch pad for a Tory political recovery.

The first rise in unemployment for three years and sharp falls in retail sales and in the value of the pound threatened to overshadow a Queen's Speech containing contentious measures on asylum, crime, education and housing, and intended to spearhead the Conservatives' Autumn Offensive.

Tony Blair and John Major began to draw the battle-lines

other's parties of playing the "race card" over the forthcoming and controversial Asylum and Immigration Bill, which is designed to reduce bogus asylum applications.

Mr Blair, whom senior Tories say will suffer electoral damage if Labour opposes the measure, called for the Bill to be referred to a special standing committee that could call expert witnesses and be "a genuinely consensual exercise in getting at the truth."

Mr Major said that while he would consider the request, he was not immediately "attracted" to the idea. In a strong defence of his own record on race relations, he promised that "genuine asylum cases will always receive a ready refuge in our country" and said that "those who attack this Bill, as Mr Blair did, do our excellent race relations no service whatever."

A further cloud was cast over the Government's political fight-back yesterday when Julian Critchley, the Tory MP for Aldershot who is retiring at the election, announced that he would not be voting Conservative for his own MP in Ludlow, the Euro-sceptic Christopher Gill. In a notably unhelpful article in the *Evening Standard*, Mr Critchley warned that the Tories would probably be in opposition for at least eight years, and added that defeat could leave the party an "unattractive blend of English nationalists, radicals and populists."

Yesterday's figures have intensified the pressure on the Chancellor to come up with a credible budget that will allow him to reduce interest rates without precipitating a run on sterling.

With the pound within a whisker of its all-time low against the German mark and concerns among foreign investors about a give-away budget, Kenneth Clarke has a difficult task ahead of him.

Today's figures for the public borrowing requirement, which in the first six months of this financial year has been running ahead of the deficit



The Chairman of the Conservative Party, Brian Mawhinney, was sprayed with fluorescent orange paint (right) yesterday while making his way from the House of Commons across College Green for lunchtime interviews. Demonstrators protesting against the Government's Asylum Bill hurled paint and flour. Alan Duncan, Dr Mawhinney's parliamentary aide, threatened a citizen's arrest. Four demonstrators were arrested and taken to Charing Cross police station. Photograph: Giobenet



The 16 Bills designed to help Major's recovery

Reserve Forces Bill
Tidying up law, plus a new power of call-up for disaster relief and peace-keeping.

Chemical Weapons Bill
To ratify the Convention to ban making and use of chemical weapons.

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill
Renewal of emergency powers, this time, more temporary than usual.

Broadcasting Bill
To regulate new digital technology and allow bigger TV newspaper companies.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill
Would allow private sector to build, maintain and operate high-speed railway between Folkestone and London's St Pancras.

Nursery Education Bill
Vouchers for part-time places for four-year-olds.

Grant-Maintained Schools Bill
Powers to borrow against "non-core" assets.

Student Loans Bill
To allow students to obtain subsidised loans from high street banks.

Education (Scotland) Bill
Would introduce nursery vouchers north of the border and reform "Highers" (Scotland's 'A' Levels).

Asylum and Immigration Bill
Assumption that asylum seekers from "safe" countries are bogus.

Security Service Bill
MIS to fight organised crime.

Criminal Trials Bill
Defence lawyers to disclose broad outline of their case in advance.

Housing Bill
Lone mothers would not get pri-

ority for council housing but right to buy for some housing association tenants.

Health Service Ombudsman Bill
Wider powers to consider complaints about doctors and other clinical professionals.

Community Care Bill
Some disabled people would be given cash to buy their own community care.

Family Law Bill
"No fault" divorce, new emphasis on family mediation, new framework of protections from violence.

'Mad boffin' jailed over computer virus havoc

PETER VICTOR

A "mad and reclusive boffin" who wreaked havoc on computer systems by spreading on-screen viruses across the world was jailed yesterday for 18 months. Christopher Pile, 26, an unemployed computer programmer, dedicated his lonely life in Plymouth, Devon, to the creation and dissemination of the viruses that caused untold damage. Pile had a world-wide reputation as The Black Baron. One company lost £500,000 due to his activities.

As he was sentenced at Exeter Crown Court yesterday after earlier pleading guilty to 11 offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990, Judge Jeremy Griggs said damage caused, or



potentially to be caused, could run into millions of pounds. What he designed and released would constitute a threat for the foreseeable future, said the judge. The evidence had confirmed that a "Pandora's Box" had been opened. Not

only did Pile create two viruses, but he designed another piece of software called Smeg which made the viruses harder to detect. The encryption engine - Smeg - had been released and could not be reined back.

"I dare say you were looking forward to reading in the computer press about the exploits of the Black Baron," said the judge. "Those who seek to reap millions have one of the vital tools of our age cannot expect lenient treatment."

Pile designed the viruses called Pathogen and Queeg, names drawn from the sci-fi television series *Red Dwarf*, of which Pile was an avid fan. Smeg was also taken from the series.

Self-taught wizard, page 2

V&A chief wants to charge £10 entrance

DAVID LISTER

Arts Correspondent

The Victoria and Albert Museum is likely to introduce compulsory admission charges and its director believes most visitors can afford to pay £10.

The new director of Britain's national museum of the decorative arts, Alan Borg, has told the trustees that the present system of seeking a voluntary donation is unworkable. At present visitors to the London museum are asked to give a £4.50 donation when they enter. No pressure is put on them if they refuse to pay. Many clearly do. The average donation per donor is £2.50 and, according to museum figures, the average amount per visitor is £1.

And in a forthright and controversial statement of his views, Dr Borg will shortly go on record as saying that most people who visit the V and A "could afford to pay a £10 entrance fee if they had to".

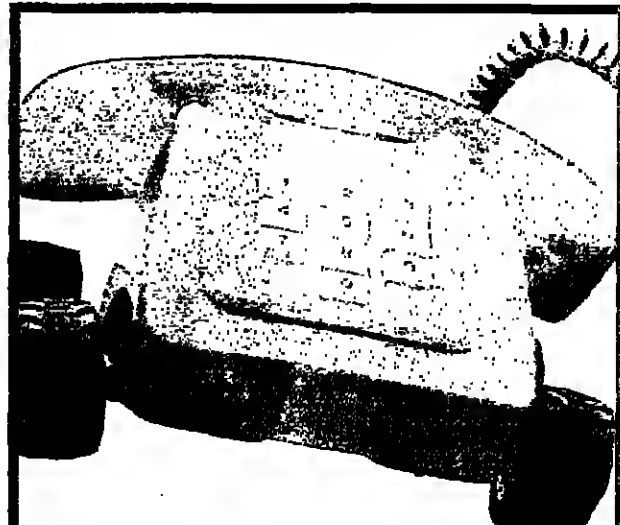
Until now the trustees of the V and A, headed by Lord Armstrong, the former Cabinet Secretary, have vigorously rejected the idea of compulsory charges publicly, though in fact the board is said to be split on the prospect. Lord Armstrong is thought to be not averse to them, while trustees from the art world such as Professor Christopher Frayling, pro rector at the Royal College of Art, are adamantly opposed.

But Dr Borg is unlikely to be deterred, even though charges

will be deplored by many in the museums and galleries lobby who say free admission encourages the young and the poor.

Dr Borg introduced compulsory admission charges in his previous job as head of the Imperial War Museum. Today Dr Borg, who took over from Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll at the V and A last month, will make his first public appearance at the museum at the presentation of its triennial report.

But he is understood to have told the trustees already that the system of voluntary donations merely tries to make visitors feel guilty, and is not an efficient way of raising much needed money. The only options are charging or having free admission.



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IN BRIEF

Lloyd's chief resigns

Peter Middleton stunned the City last night with a shock resignation as chief executive of the troubled insurance market Lloyd's of London. Page 24

Shell in Nigeria deal

Shell and other Western oil companies signed an agreement yesterday with the Nigerian military government to invest in a £2.5bn natural gas plant. Page 18



Space-age forecast

Scientists are on the verge of forecasting the "weather" in space. Page 3

College sale revelation

A potential buyer for the Royal Naval College has revealed the detail of its offer. Page 8

Attacks avoided

"It was almost midday and the flood of suicide bombers had not put in an appearance," Robert Fisk on the Algeria's presidential election. Page 14

Today's weather

Rainy in most of the country. Tonight it will be cold and breezy. Section Two, Page 25

TV sex doesn't turn off Auntie

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Media Correspondent

Viewers are more tolerant of sex on television than previously thought, according to new research done for the BBC. Even some of the most conservative watchers - middle-aged women - now find sex and nudity on screen acceptable.

The survey, comparing attitudes now with those in 1985, reveals that over the last decade there has been an increasing liberalisation of attitudes. On sex and nudity, older women's tolerance has gone up by 8 per cent to 41 per cent, while middle-

aged women have gone up from 44 to 59 per cent.

The largest shift in attitudes has been towards homosexuality. Between 1985 and 1995 there has been a 20 per cent fall in the notion that homosexuality is offensive on television. Forty per cent of women over 55 now find it acceptable, as do 56 per cent of middle-aged men (35 to 55) and 70 per cent of young men (18-34).

Despite recent complaints about issues as diverse as an orgy scene in *Absolutely Fabulous*, an attempt by Michele in *EastEnders* to seduce her married boss, 44 per cent of view-

ers rate the BBC's performance in setting standards of taste and decency as excellent or very good, Stephen Whittle, the chief adviser on editorial policy, told a BBC governors' seminar on taste and decency.

That figure was well above the 27 per cent response for ITV and 15 per cent for Channel 4. The acceptance rate for bad language has risen from 69 per cent to 75 per cent among young people in the last 10 years. Women over 55 have also become more liberal: in the same period the percentage accepting bad language has risen from 30 to 38.



Major takes initiative on Ulster talks

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major yesterday wrote to the Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, with proposals to get the "twin track" Northern Ireland peace initiative up and running before the end of the year. Senior British ministers last night said that all-party inclusive talks could start by next February, but Mr Major refused to withdraw the British demand that the IRA begins de-

commissioning its weapons before Sinn Féin can sit down with the Ulster Unionists.

Brushing aside Irish criticism of Britain for allegedly dragging its heels, Mr Major sought Mr Bruton's support for the strategy involving preparatory talks with all the parties and an international commission to deal with the IRA's stockpile of bombs and heavy weapons.

London and Dublin are still at odds over the British demand,

the third condition set out in Washington by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, that the IRA should begin decommissioning its weapons before Sinn Féin is admitted to the substantive talks.

There appeared a willingness by London to move forward without resolving that issue. "We don't agree on Washington Three. We can put that on one side temporarily to see if there is a basis for agreement," said a senior Government source.

The willingness to move forward without resolving the crucial issue of decommissioning pleased Dublin sources, who welcomed the Prime Minister's letter. "It's been called constructive confusion," said one source.

The twin-track strategy was to be announced at a summit in September, until called off by Dublin after a warning by Sinn Féin that it would not accept the international commission.

Since then, Dublin has been

seeking to persuade Sinn Féin to accept the formula, but talks with Michael Ancram, the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, broke down a week ago, with Sinn Féin demanding that British Army weapons be counted with their own by the commission.

Dublin supported the British Government in rejecting that demand, and the success of the initiative will now depend on the ability of the Irish Government to persuade Sinn Féin

to join the talks process. British Ministers meanwhile will have to get the Ulster Unionists to enter the talks.

Mr Major attacked the Sinn Féin leadership in his speech to the Commons yesterday for refusing to condemn the punishment beatings meted out to victims in Belfast by IRA supporters. But Downing Street sources made it clear the Prime Minister was not setting out a new condition for Sinn Féin to enter the all-party talks. "It's

something which genuinely upsets him. It is not a new condition, or Washington Four," said the source.

Meanwhile, David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, and Ian Paisley, the DUP leader, joined forces at Westminster to mark their united opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement ten years ago giving influence over Ulster affairs to the Irish Government.

They both rejected the twin-track approach.

IN BRIEF

Murder trial jury is discharged

The trial of a man accused of murdering his wife, a building society manager, and attempting to deceive police into believing that she was killed by robbers who abducted her from their home, was halted yesterday and the jury discharged.

The trial of Gordon Wardell opened on Tuesday at Oxford Crown Court but came to an unexpected stop after a jury member disclosed information to court officials. Mr Wardell, 42, of Meriden, Warwickshire, denies murdering his wife Carol, 39, in September last year. The trial is expected to resume today after a new jury has been sworn in.

Water warning

Pubs in areas of Yorkshire affected by planned rota water cuts could be put out of business if the cuts are approved, a public inquiry considering the application by Yorkshire Water heard.

The loss of the daily water supply in the Calderdale and Kirkstall areas would affect food preparation, glass washing and laundry facilities, the hearing at Dewsbury was told. A decision on the application is expected early next week.

Father accused

A man is to appear in court today accused of murdering his eight-year-old daughter and her mother. Mark Aryan, 35, of Southwark, south east London, is charged with the murders of Gillian Jacobs, 28, and their daughter, Sharmeen Aryan, whose bodies were found at a house in Tunbridge Wells on Sunday. He is also charged with the attempted murder of Yusuf Aryan, aged five, and Ibrahim Aryan, two.

Ford pay talks

Pay negotiations at Ford were continuing last night after union leaders rejected an improved wage offer of 4 per cent this year and a rise to match the inflation rate next year. Management refused to concede a union claim for a two-hour reduction in the working week to 37 hours.

Drink-drive blitz

A comic commercial with a hard-hitting edge will premiere in cinemas across Britain on Friday in a campaign to press home the anti-drink-driving message in the run-up to Christmas. The advertisements, by leading beer brand Holsten Pils, feature the American stand-up comedian Denis Leary and use amusing and blunt language and images. They may also be on the small screen in coming weeks. If they are approved by the Independent Television Commission.

Marked down

Water companies have been frozen out of this year's Charter Mark awards because of concern over the quality of some services. Lord Bylde, the chairman of the judging panel, said yesterday: "We concluded that, given the general public concern, it would be wrong to award any Charter Marks to water companies this year."

Grave fraud

A pet cemetery owner who promised dog-owners ornate caskets and then buried their animals in tin-liners was convicted of fraud at Derby Crown Court. Freda Cunningham was not in court to hear the verdict and sentence was adjourned.

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'Black Baron' a self-taught whizz kid

PETER VICTOR

The "Black Baron", who spread computer chaos around the world, was in fact a self-taught computer whizz-kid who used a basic personal computer to write viruses that have already caused more than £1m of damage and are almost certainly still attacking computer systems.

Christopher Pile, a 26-year-old loner with no academic qualifications who lived alone in Plymouth, used his natural talent with computers to create infamous viruses called Pathogen and Queeg, based on expressions used in *Red Dwarf*, the BBC's cult television series.

Pile was the most dangerous of a small band of virus writers in Britain. He was also the most infamous, with his viruses posted on Internet sites around the world.

David Emm, senior technology consultant at S&S Software, a computer virus and security firm, said: "If people are intelligent enough to do this sort of thing why don't they go down fruitful paths."

Several computer hackers have gone on lucrative positions in "pouches" turned gamekeepers' roles in international software companies.

Pile did not take this route. Instead, Exeter Crown Court heard that he designed Smeg to defeat the most sophisticated anti-virus programme, and achieve maximum penetration causing the greatest amount of damage.

In a police interview, Pile said he wrote the viruses to increase his self-esteem, and because he was disappointed there was no effective viruses in circulation written by a UK virus writer.

The viruses devised by Pile, who signed them from Black Baron UK 94, were the two most sophisticated ever written. What made them doubly

dangerous was another virus, an encryption engine, or code-scrambling system, he called Smeg, which could be attached to the other viruses. On each infection Smeg would change its form, producing as many as four million different versions.

Pile spread the viruses by hiding them in innocent-looking computer games - and even in a piece of anti-virus software - which users around the country downloaded from electronic bulletin boards, unwittingly infecting their own systems.

Every time a piece of his software was run, one of the viruses attached itself to files and expanded them - a process which eventually used up all the system's memory, rendering it completely unusable.

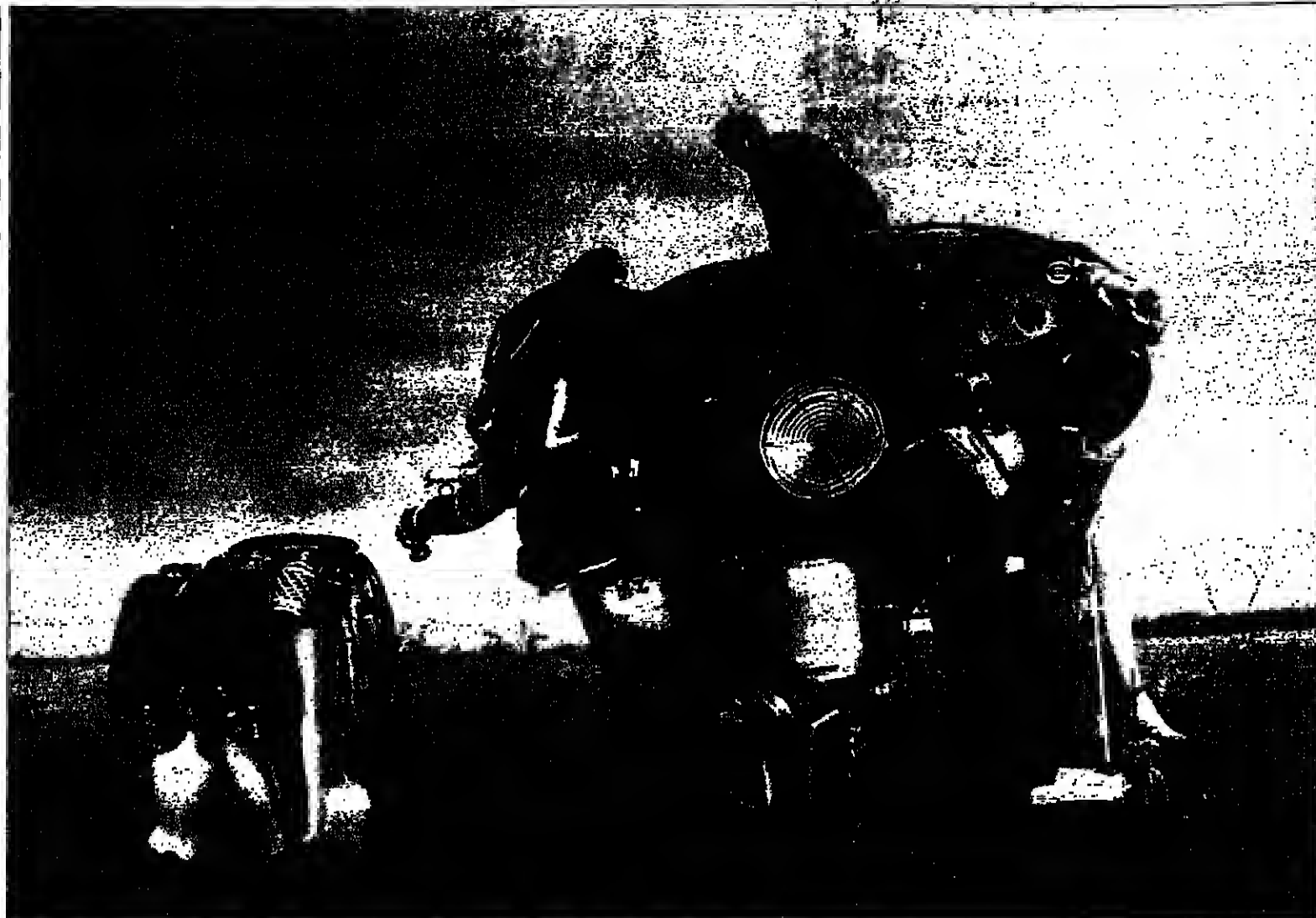
Pile encouraged other computer buffs to write their own viruses and use his Smeg virus - which he made available on bulletin boards.

A third version of the Smeg engine enabled it to exist as an independent entity which could be passed on to others for inclusion in their viruses.

Smeg was available on the Internet in the United States and Germany, and had reached criminal elements in Northern Ireland and the US, Brian Lett, for the prosecution, told the court yesterday. "Some future damage is inevitable," he said. "Its effect is incalculable."

Mr Lett added that as part of the investigation police had gone to a house in Belfast where they found a computer bulletin board, called *Illegality The Unstoppable Crime Machine*, with a version of Smeg on it.

He told the court that Pile had designed two damaging and destructive viruses with the intention of releasing them to the public communications network.



Jumbo art: The sculptor, Antony Heywood, with his work 'Mother and Calf', at Wingham, Kent. The sculpture, which is made from disused shop mannequins and television tubes, will be shown at Worthing Museum in January.

Threat of rebellion over Whitehall cuts

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Senior Tory MPs were last night threatening a rebellion to defend the BBC Overseas Service from the Treasury's five per cent cut in running costs across Whitehall.

Foreign Office sources last night confirmed the cut in running costs could be passed onto the BBC from the Foreign Office. "It's decided internally how we sort it out within our budget," said one source.

Peter Temple-Morris, the

leader of the Madeod group of Tory MPs, said he was "very concerned" about the threat of a cut and was tabling questions for Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, to ensure it was not passed on to the BBC Overseas Service, which has been cut by £5m over the past three years.

Civil Service leaders were also alarmed at the prospect of the five per cent cut in running costs across the board, disclosed in the *Independent* yesterday.

It could mean cuts in service

to the public, and reductions in already overstretched public services such as dole and benefit offices, said Tony Rouse, vice president of the National Union of Civil and Public Servants, representing thousands of lower-paid civil servants.

"Any cut in running costs is going to cost jobs. It is being done by a Government which is clearly hell-bent on getting elected by cutting taxes, but it will mean reductions in services. We have got to lay off at all. There is too much being asked of members," he said.

The cuts will be confirmed in the Budget by the Chancellor on 28 November, and the Whitehall unions were last night considering linking up in united opposition to any threat of job losses.

The First Division Association, representing 10,000 top grade civil servants, said that a cut of five per cent in running costs would be on top of the freeze imposed on civil service costs in the past two years and the loss of over 400 senior management posts.

The Inland Revenue and the

Social Security Department have escaped the full impact of the five per cent cut in running costs because they are carrying out anti-fraud campaigns, which require more staff. But the cuts could still hit their other operations.

The FDA spokesman said it was difficult to judge how many posts would be put at risk by the cut in running costs, but they are needed for bad news on Budget Day. "If you don't have much in your programme, then a bash at the civil service is an easy target," he said.

Rail franchise for buy-out team

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

One of the companies bidding to run rail services is set to win a 15-year franchise, double the normal seven years, in order to allow it to buy new trains.

The management buy-out team bid for the London, Tilbury and Southend railway, which has successfully fought off three private sector bidders, is based on the premise that a 15-year term is necessary to allow the purchase of an entire new fleet of trains. The franchise director, Roger Salmon, is in the final stages of negotiations with the team and it is thought that the deal would require the new operator to provide the trains within a given timetable or revert to a seven-year deal.

The decision shows the extent to which the Government is prepared to alter the rules in order to encourage new investment on

the railways. The commitment to obtain new trains from the private sector would be a feather in the cap for the privatisation initiative, especially after the criticism earlier this week from the Sea Containers president, James Sherwood, who said that privatisation would not help bring investment to the "deteriorating rail network". Sea Containers had unsuccessfully sought 12-year contracts on two lines.

All bids to run lines involve asking for subsidies to provide the service and while most of the bids entered so far have been for more subsidies than currently paid to BR, it is thought that those for LTS were all for less than the current level of £14.5m (on turnover of £53m).

Meanwhile, it has emerged that a surprise bidder, Resurgence Railways, is the favourite to win the contract for Great Western Trains.

Critchley turns against Tories

The veteran Tory MP Sir Julian Critchley, yesterday dropped a political bombshell by revealing that he will not vote for the party at the general election.

Sir Julian, who is stepping down at the next election, said his decision was based on objections to the MP for Ludlow (the constituency where he will spend his retirement), the Eurosceptic, Christopher Gill.

However, Sir Julian said he would not back Labour or the Liberal Democrats. He announced his decision in a newspaper article in which he fired a devastating broadside at the "less well-educated, deeply prejudiced and chauvinist" Tory party left by Margaret Thatcher, and wrote off the chances of a Tory election victory.

The timing of the attack - on the day the Government unveiled its legislative package for the new session of Parliament

- will infuriate John Major and senior ministers.

The left-leaning MP for Aldershot, who has been no stranger to controversy during a colourful political career, said he could not bring himself to vote for Mr Gill, who was one of nine Tories removed from the whip at the turn of the year.

Sir Julian said Mr Gill would take Britain out of Europe. "Should any Tory who has been pro-Europe since the days of Harold Macmillan and a member of the One Nation group of Tories be obliged to vote for a candidate who not only lost the party whip in 1993, but... does not seem to care whether his party wins or not?" Sir Julian wrote in the *London Evening Standard*.

"I shall sit on my hands. Blair's new Labour Party holds an attraction for me and nothing on earth would persuade me to vote for the Liberals."

Red card for the up-front greengrocer

A greengrocer must remove fruit and vegetables from outside his shop after a High Court judge yesterday ruled that the pavement display was breaking the law.

In a case which affects shopkeepers all over the country, the judge said the display outside Brian Godfrey's premises in Epsom, Surrey, did constitute a "nuisance" in law as it obstructed the pavement and local magistrates had been wrong to find otherwise.

No members of the public had complained and no accident had been caused by Mr God-

frey's boxes of apples, tomatoes and other produce.

Joe Murphy, chairman of Derbyshire's highways and transport committee, said: "I am pleased that the High Court has upheld the county council's argument that any unlawful obstruction of the highway is a nuisance."

"The council is firmly of the opinion that pavements are for people, and that they should be kept clear of all obstructions for the benefit of pedestrians - particularly disabled people, people with impaired sight and parents with pushchairs. If we

had made an exception... a precedent could have been set."

A legal expert said the judgment made clear it was for local authorities to decide how to exercise their discretion in such cases. Yesterday's ruling did not mean that the custom of shopkeepers displaying their wares on pavements would now disappear - only that it would continue to be subject to local authority control. The Labour-controlled council brought the appeal, supported by many other local authorities, to have the law clarified.

Mr Godfrey, who escaped a

potentially large bill for legal costs when the council decided not to seek a costs order against him, said: "I hope other councils will act more sensibly."

Mr Godfrey was supported by a 750-signature petition and had offered the council a compromise over the size of his display, which was turned down.

Mr Godfrey, 54, whose display protruded about one metre on to the 2.5m wide pavement, said: "I really can't believe that anybody in authority would go as far as this against a small businessman like me." He said the future of

his business was in doubt following a 74 per cent drop in trade since 1992.

A former miner, he bought his greengrocer's business in 1986 after being made redundant from the pits. "The fruit and veg will come in now. The law is the law and I am a law-abiding person," he said.

Mr Justice Hadden said he had ruled against the greengrocer with some "sadness" because it was clear that he was a "hardworking man" whose business had already been hit by decisions to build a bypass and pedestrianise part of Epsom.

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Global frontier: A box of...

Houston don't have problem

BBC set to ransom from

The art of getting

The final frontier: A box of chocolates and three carnations mark the occasion as Atlantis and Mir linked in silent darkness



Houston, we don't have a problem...

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Every day since he went aboard the Mir space station on 5 September, the German astronaut Thomas Reiter has been beaten 500 times on the heel—at the behest of scientists from Bristol University.

Yesterday, however, he got a break from his daily "basinado" while astronauts and cosmonauts shook hands in orbit as the space shuttle Atlantis joined the Russian space station in orbit 392 kilometres (245 miles) above Earth, for the second time in four months.

About two and a half hours after steering Atlantis to a flawless docking with the 125-ton station, the shuttle commander Kenneth Cameron opened the hatch separating the spacecraft and greeted the Mir commander Yuri Gidzenko with a box of chocolates and three flowers: peach-coloured carnations. On the shuttle is the Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, and the combined crews represent the United States, Russia, Canada and the European Space Agency.

The mix of nationalities is a record for a single spacecraft, and represents four out of the five participants in the planned international space station, Alpha, which is due to start in 1997. Japan is the other contributor to the space station project, for which the present mission is a pathfinder.

This second Atlantis-Mir link-up was considered trickier

and more dangerous than the first, in late June, because of a 4.5m (15ft) docking tunnel jutting out of the shuttle cargo bay. The shuttle crew's first job during this mission is to deliver the tunnel, so the next five dockings will be easier and safer. The tunnel will remain part of Mir after Atlantis leaves on Saturday.

Reiter and his Russian colleagues, however, will continue in orbit until 29 February 1996. The mission has been extended by 44 days so that Reiter will spend 180 days in space—a record for a European astronaut. For most of the time, he will have been a human guinea pig, with all his bodily functions being monitored to assess the effects of prolonged weightlessness on the human body.

The results could hold the key to understanding down-to-earth diseases such as osteoporosis, according to Professor Allen Goodship, of Bristol University. People may feel that space is a luxury, he said, "but there are things you can do in space that give information on conditions people experience on the ground".

Together with colleagues from the engineering department at nearby Bath university, Professor Goodship has designed and built a machine which mimics the mechanical shock that bones endure as the heel strikes the ground repeatedly while walking on earth.

Professor Goodship pointed out that although the cosmonauts exercise for a minimum

of two hours everyday, on bicycles and rowing machines, the bones in their legs still get thinner and weaker as a result of weightlessness. The process appears similar to that of post-menopausal osteoporosis.

The skeleton is not just an inert piece of scaffolding supporting the rest of the body, said Professor Goodship, but a dynamic tissue which responds to mechanical stresses. He hopes that his machine will stimulate the bone cells to maintain bone density during the flight.

One heel is being hit 500 times during the daily 10-minute sessions while the other is left unstimulated. The thickness of Reiter's bones was measured before he took off, is being measured during the flight and will be measured again when he lands, to see if there is any difference between the two legs.

Another British experiment, originating from the Hammer-smith hospital in London, requires the hapless Reiter to wear a tourniquet round one ankle, to which pressure is intermittently applied for one hour each day.

Researchers will also peer at his chromosomes to see if any aberrations develop during his sojourn in space. The state of his lungs and of his cardiovascular system will be assessed and the levels of hormones in his blood and urine will be monitored. In the last month of the flight, he will take Vitamin K tablets, as part of another experiment on bone density loss.



Making contact: The docking procedure (above left) and Russian commander Yuri Gidzenko greeting his guests (above) Photographs: AP/Nasa

Beating the weather from space

DANNY PENMAN

Scientists are on the verge of forecasting the "weather" in space, crucial for such diverse industries as telecommunications, power, oil and gas distribution.

The solar wind, containing fast and energetic, charged particles, blows constantly outwards from the Sun. The Earth's magnetic field shields the surface from the buffeting gales but several times per year the wind causes surges in the aura surrounding the planet.

The massive changes in the magnetic field can knock out communications satellites, cause electricity black-outs and interfere with television and radio broadcasts.

In March 1989 a huge solar storm blacked out half of Canada's electricity distribution system and deflected compasses by up to 70 degrees.

The oil and gas industries have also come to fear the effects of the solar wind. The fluxes in the earth's magnetic field can induce electrical currents which can trigger explosions. The greatest danger they face

is corrosion which can be enhanced by the electricity coursing along the metal pipelines.

At least one gas pipeline explosion, which claimed more than 650 lives, is thought to have been the result of electrically induced corrosion caused by fluxes in the Earth's magnetic field. They were killed when a fireball engulfed two trains on the Trans-Siberian line in June 1989.

The first step to forecasting surges in the solar wind and predicting its effect on the Earth will be taken next Thursday

when the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA launch a new satellite to study the Sun. Early next year four other satellites will be launched as part of the same programme.

SOHO, the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory, will be launched first. The £400 million satellite will blast off from Kennedy Space Center and travel 1.5 million kilometres towards the Sun and hang exactly balanced between the gravitational pull of the Sun and Earth.

The satellite, to which Britain

has contributed more than £40m, contains a battery of detectors which will allow scientists to build up a detailed picture of the internal structure of the Sun, its atmosphere and composition of the solar wind.

Some of its telescopes may reveal what heats the corona, the sun's atmosphere, and drives the solar wind. Particle detectors will link the gusts in the solar wind to upheavals in the Sun's surface.

Another detector, known as Golf, will monitor the rhythmic movements in the sun's surface

caused by massive sound waves as they pass through the star.

The next step to forecasting will be taken early next year when another four satellites, known as Cluster, will be launched. Cluster will monitor the interaction of the solar wind and the Earth's magnetic field in three dimensions.

Once the effects felt on the Earth and satellites can be linked to precise events on the Sun and within the solar wind then the scientists hope they can start making solar weather predictions within five years.

BBC set to make a king's ransom from Diana film

LOUISE JURY and
MARIANNE MACDONALD

The world is set to be stunned by the astonishingly honest interview given by the Princess of Wales to the BBC, it emerged yesterday.

As the Corporation began sifting bids from every major broadcaster in the world for the rights to show the *Panorama* programme, informed speculation pointed to the Princess having pulled no punches when she talked to reporter Martin Bashir.

It is understood that she has spoken fluently on all the key questions of her family, separation and future, in the hour-long programme which BBC bosses believe will prove a riveting insight into the Charles and Diana story.

Worldwide interest in the special documentary was described yesterday as "unprecedented" by one television insider, even though details of the interview are known only to

a handful and are not being revealed in advance of Monday's screening.

Tony Hall, managing director of news and current affairs, said the tape had been seen by only eight people, including John Birt, the Director General, but not Marmaduke Hussey, the Chairman of the Governors whose wife is Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen.

He revealed that Princess Diana gave the final go-ahead about two weeks ago, after several meetings with Mr Bashir during his research for a programme on the constitution. Filming took place without any Royal aides or press officers present on 5 November, when the Queen was in New Zealand.

There were no constraints. "The only request we had from the Princess of Wales was that she was to tell the Palace first that she had done the interview and she asked us to abide by that," Mr Hall said. "It was a proper interview over a wide range of issues including the



The Princess: Her honesty has astonished the BBC

role of the princess and her future role.

The BBC is sensitive about being seen to benefit commercially from the programme, which has dismayed Buckingham Palace, but sources suggested the bidding could bring in millions.

A BBC spokesman conceded

the straightforward format of a head-to-head interview made the sales virtually "all profit". Other recent successes have notched up significant sales abroad but were more expensive to make. The *People's Century* history documentary series has brought in £5m, but that was only half the production cost. The hugely popular adaptation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* has been licensed to nine countries so far, with contracts worth £500,000.

A BBC source added: "[The interview] could end up being seen by more people in the world than any other programme has been before."

But the official spokesman said that although it was in discussion with a "large number of foreign broadcasters," the BBC did not expect to finalise any of the sales before Friday at the earliest.

A spokeswoman for CBS, one of the major American channels, confirmed it was among the bidders

The art of getting one's own back

REBECCA FOWLER

Revenge is a dish best served cold, according to the Italians. This was not the approach taken by the first Mrs TS Eliot, who poured hot melted chocolate through her husband's office letterbox when his secretary refused to pass on her calls.

But the most recent practitioners of getting one's own back, like the Princess of Wales,

have allowed themselves time to plot. Destroying clothing, planting mustard seed on an unfaithful partner's soaked carpet, and hiding rotten fish inside curtain rails are now commonplace.

Lady Sarah Graham-Moore, whose husband, Sir Peter, went off with another woman, cut off the sleeves of his Savile Row suits, daubed paint over his BMW car and delivered his vintage wine to doorsteps around

the village like bottles of milk. Seeking vengeance is as old as civilisation. Samson lost his strength when Delilah cut off his hair. But it is not only domestic revenge that flourishes. John Lennon and Paul McCartney waged a musical war against each other after the Beatles split up by writing songs about their erstwhile partner.

The most memorable political revenge was the blow Geoffrey Howe dealt against

Baroness Thatcher in his resignation speech as deputy prime minister after years of service. "The time has come for others to consider their own response to the tragic conflict of loyalties with which I have myself wrestled for perhaps too long," he said, felling her with the best tool of revenge of all, the one the Princess of Wales is about to take up—words.

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July 1201510

Euro Disney takes the Mickey into profit



Winning theme: Euro Disney has recorded its first profit since its launch two years ago

Photograph: Paul Lowe/Magnum

JOHN SHEPHERD

Euro Disney's decision to slash admission prices by 22 per cent in April is already yielding financial gains at its theme park, Disneyland Paris. The company yesterday reported its first ever profit, albeit tiny at £262,000, a year ahead of schedule.

The price cuts, accompanied by an extensive television advertising campaign, helped boost attendance numbers by almost 22 per cent from last year's depressed 8.8 million to 10.7 million in the 12 months to the end of September. Attendance in the first year of operation in 1993 was 9.8 million.

Leisure analysts in the City, however, do not share the management's optimism about the future. In particular, they continue to harbour negative views about the company's financial health, despite the recent refinancing that erased £18.8bn of debts from the balance sheet.

The reaction among investors yesterday was equally as negative. The shares dropped 21p to 194p, and the

steepness of the fall triggered an automatic suspension of share dealings on the Paris bourse.

The profit announced yesterday was only achieved courtesy of banks allowing the company a holiday on £1600m of interest payments on loans, and a separate waiver by the Walt Disney company on management fees and royalties.

Euro Disney's holiday on interest payments begins to wind down from next year. In 1996 its interest charges will rise by £1120m, by another £1230m in 1997, and a further £120m the following year.

Walt Disney, which owns a 39 per cent share stake in the company, intends to start changing Euro Disney hundreds of millions of francs for management time and for copyright royalties in 1999.

Steve Burke, chief operating officer of Euro Disney, yesterday acknowledged the problem, but said he was confident that it could be overcome. Revenues, he said, only needed to be increased by 5 per cent each year to cover the additional payments to the banks and Disney.

"Our bad times are behind us and talk of whether we have built the park in the right place or whether it will ever be profitable is in the past," he added.

However, analysts said the company would have to run fast to stand still given the adverse economic conditions across Europe and the strength of the French currency.

More people may be going to the theme park, but once inside they are reluctant to spend more money than the previous year's visitors. Only 25 per cent of revenue comes from admission charges, currently £195 per adult in the high season, falling to £150 in the winter.

New revenue streams are being developed through building additional leisure facilities for guests staying at its hotels such as a multi-screen cinema, and by targeting families.

Talks are being held with Eurostar to run charter trains, complete with Disney characters on board, direct from Waterloo to the park. Britons account for 10 per cent of total visitors, and are among the higher spenders. Investment column, page 26

Cholesterol drug cuts heart attacks

GLENDIA COOPER

A new drug which slows the production of cholesterol in the liver has had "striking" results in reducing risk to people with high levels of the fat-like substance.

The study found that lowering cholesterol can reduce heart attacks by nearly one-third and the risk of death by 22 per cent.

Coronary heart disease is the single most important cause of death in the UK and throughout the industrialised world. In 1993, 70 per cent of UK adults had high cholesterol levels.

The West of Scotland Coronary Prevention Study trial of the drug pravastatin, sold under the name Lipostat, included 6,500 men from the Glasgow area over a five-year period.

All had high cholesterol levels. All were aged between 45 and 64 and 81,000 men were considered for inclusion in the study.

Half the patients were given Lipostat and half a placebo. Neither volunteers nor scientists knew which had which.

The findings from the study, revealed at the American Heart Association in California yesterday, showed a 31 per cent reduction in risk from a first heart attack or non-fatal heart attack.

The chances of death from heart disease also went down by 32 per cent and death from any cause went down by 22 per cent.

High cholesterol levels have always been viewed as a major risk factor for heart disease, but until now it was not known

whether treatment with a cholesterol-lowering drug could help people avoid a first heart attack.

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance or lipid, produced by the liver and also absorbed into the body from foods such as eggs, meat, dairy products and other animal-based foods.

High levels can form plaque, a thick hard deposit, which clogs the arteries and restricts the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart and brain.

Professor James Shephard, Professor of Pathological Biochemistry at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, who also led the study, said: "These are some of the most striking data I have ever seen in heart attack and total mortality reduction."

"The findings strongly support current treatment guidelines and irrefutably encourage physicians to actively treat people who are at risk of heart attack."

He added: "We can now say with confidence that pravastatin reduces the risk of heart attack and death, not just in those with established heart disease but also amongst those who are at risk of their first heart attack."

Michael Turner, director of the Family Heart Association, said: "The cholesterol controversy that has raged for half a century is a controversy no more."

A spokesman for the Coronary Prevention Group welcomed the study's findings but said that the best way for people to keep cholesterol levels down was by following a healthy lifestyle.

Five held in hunt for drug girl's supplier

Police investigating the supply of ecstasy to drug victim Leah Betts yesterday arrested five people.

Detectives also issued an urgent appeal to trace an anonymous woman telephone caller who gave information which they say could provide a key lead in the hunt for the drug pusher who supplied Leah, 18, who was still fighting for her life yesterday.

An Essex police spokeswoman said the arrests followed raids on four addresses in Basildon. A 25-year-old man and an 18-year-old woman were taken from one address and two 19-year-old men arrested from two separate locations. The fifth arrest, of another 19-year-old man, was made later.

All four men were being held on suspicion of supplying a controlled drug while the woman was detained on suspicion of possessing counterfeit currency. All five suspects were being questioned at Basildon police station.

Leah yesterday remained in a coma on a ventilator at Broomfield hospital, Chelmsford, where a spokesman said her condition was critical.

The student collapsed after taking an ecstasy tablet, marked with an apple motif, at her 18th birthday party on Sunday

at her parents' home at Latchingdon, Essex.

Five people aged between 17 and 19 have already been interviewed and released on police bail, but their arrests on Monday were not thought to have been specifically connected with inquiries into the supply of drugs to Leah.

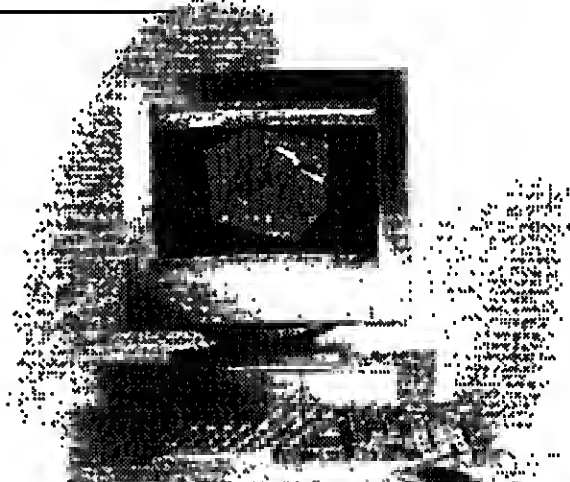
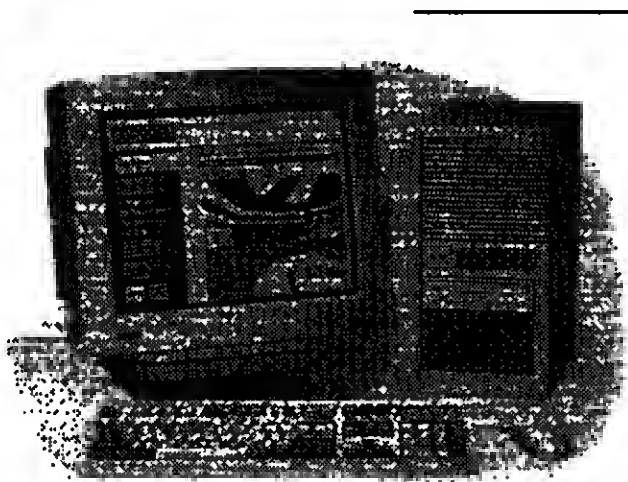
The anonymous caller whom police are trying to trace telephoned Chelmsford police at 11am on Tuesday. The woman told police on Friday night she and a friend were in Raquel's nightclub in Basildon, the place where Leah is thought to have bought the ecstasy.

"They saw a young man 'serve up' ecstasy tablets similar to those taken by Leah," a police spokeswoman said. "One girl, not thought to be Leah, was seen to buy a tablet and shortly afterwards was violently ill and shaking. We are anxious for any of these three girls to contact police."

Detective Chief Inspector Brian Storey said: "We consider this to be a very strong lead. Any information will be treated in the strictest confidence."

It was disclosed yesterday that the ecstasy tablet taken by Leah was not contaminated. However, there was no explanation as to why Leah suffered such a devastating reaction.

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PC Computing, June 1995

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH



Asylum & Immigration Bill

The big political football, devised by Home Secretary Michael Howard. Subject of heavy pre-emptive assault yesterday as Tony Blair demanded debate in a "special standing committee" which could take evidence and call witnesses. It would mean assuming asylum seekers from "safe" countries were cheating, and a curtailed appeals procedure.

Political punch: Furious charge and counter-charge as each party accuses the other of playing the race card.

Real importance: Will matter to the 30,000-plus applicants for refugee status each year, and to Britain's reputation abroad.

Family Law Bill

Divorce reform, to abolish "quickie" divorces and require a cooling-off period. Plus the resurrection of plans to clarify legal protection from domestic violence, held over after ill-informed Tory "moral majority" revolt, which could now spread to the divorce issue.

Political punch: Boomerang potential as Tory rebels gear up to defend "the sacred institution of the family".

Real importance: Will matter to one in three couples who divorce, and many victims of domestic violence.

Grant-maintained Schools Bill

Schools which have opted out of local council control will be given powers to borrow against "non-core" assets. Tories will taunt Blair over his choice of school. But the real political battle comes later with plans to abolish parent ballots for church schools to opt out, which could boost grant-maintained status.

Political punch: Tories think this issue works for them, while Labour will say they are selling off playing fields.

Real importance: More financial independence for the minority of opted-out schools.

Broadcasting Bill

To take into account new digital technology, which means at least 16 extra television channels, and allow TV/newspaper mergers (but excluding Rupert Murdoch and Mirror Group). Tories claim it will help make Britain the "entertainment centre of Europe".

Political punch: One row over Blair's (not directly related) "deal" with BT.

Real importance: digital technology may be overtaken by cable, but control of media mergers makes a difference.

Asylum clampdown sparks race-bias fears

IMMIGRATION
JASON BENNETT

The forthcoming Asylum and Immigration Bill will be one of the Government's most controversial pieces of new legislation and has already provoked accusations that it is playing the race card in the run up to the general election.

One of the central planks of the Bill, whose main aim is to restrict the number of people claiming asylum, is the creation of a so-called "white list" of countries, deemed to be "safe" and therefore unlikely to produce real refugees. Applications from the listed countries will be given a "fast-track" treatment.

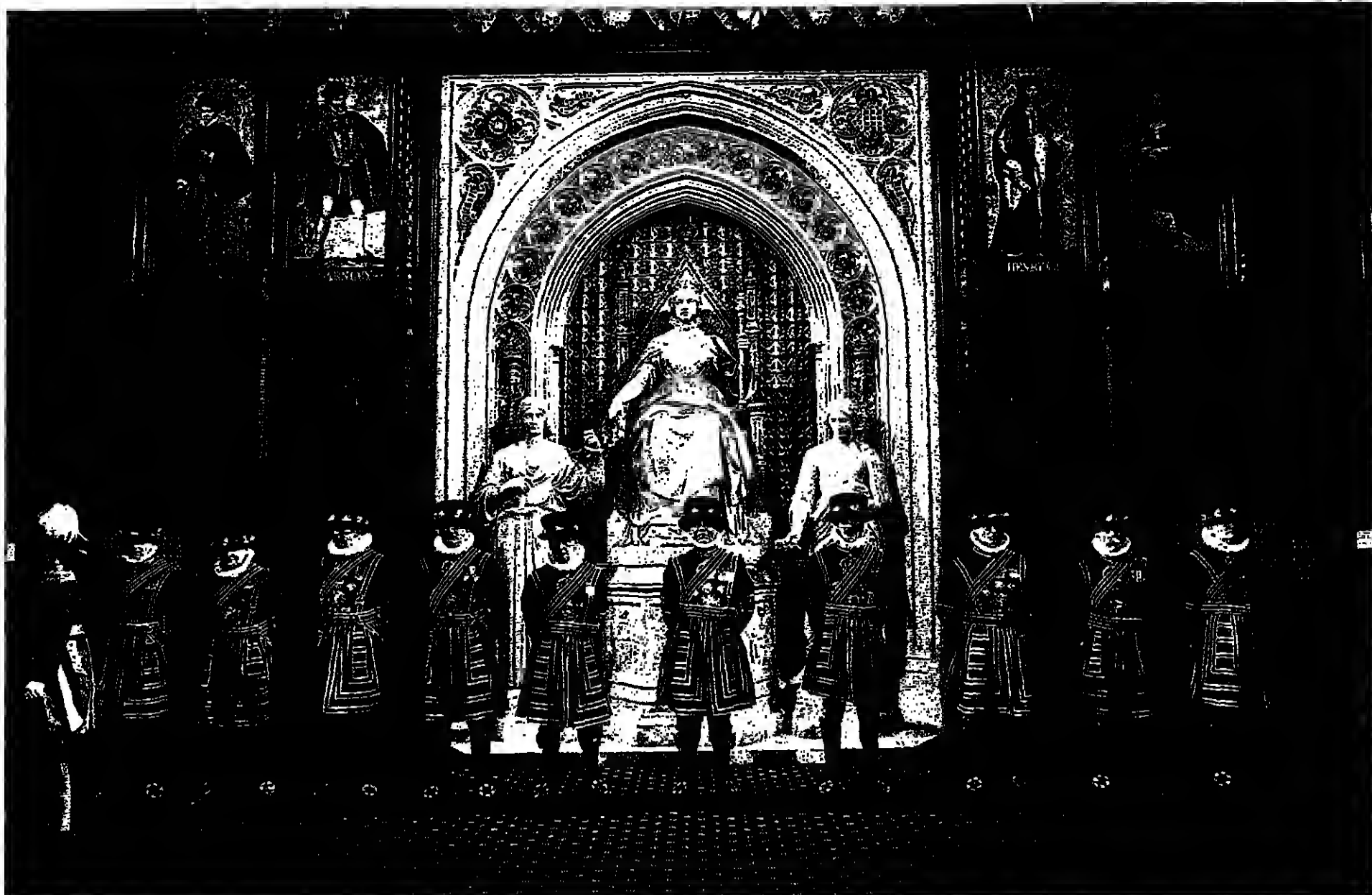
Tony Blair, the Labour leader, yesterday attacked the Bill, saying: "Race and immigration should not be the plaything of party politics." He called on the Government to refer it to a special Commons standing committee that could scrutinise the legislation and test whether it is justified.

An indication of the sensitivity of the Bill was revealed by the Government's unwillingness to publish any details of the proposed legislation.

Last week, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, retreated from an earlier plan to include legislation to fine employers who hire illegal immigrants. He has now agreed to put the proposal out to consultation following opposition from employers' organisations, civil rights groups and the Department for Education and Employment, which feared it could result in companies being less ready to recruit ethnic minority staff. Meanwhile it is expected that the Bill will require employers to check the records of potential recruits, in an effort to stop illegal immigrants working, backed up by a "light, regulatory approach".

Another expected proposal is the abolition of full appeal rights to those refugees arriving via a safe third country, such as France.

Running alongside the Bill are measures announced by Peter Lilley, the Social Secu-



Guard of honour: Beefeaters at the Palace of Westminster yesterday for the Queen's Speech unveiling the Government's legislative proposals

Photograph: John Voss

ry Secretary, which will make it impossible to enter the country as a visitor, but then seek asylum to claim benefit, in a move designed to save up to £200m a year.

However the key proposal in the Bill – the "white list" – is designed to accelerate and reduce the cost of processing asylum claims. Asylum applications from residents of those coun-

tries will be presumed to be unfounded and the burden of proof will be on the applicant. They will be dealt with under a fast-track appeals procedure, that is expected to last days rather than months.

Countries that are expected to appear on the list include Ghana, India, Pakistan, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland.

The Government believes

the measures will act as a deterrent to people who are economic migrants.

The Home Office points to figures published in October that showed that in the 12 months to the end of June, there were 37,900 applications for asylum (excluding dependants) received in the UK, an increase of almost 50 per cent over the previous year.

However, while it is true that more people are applying for asylum, far fewer are being allowed entry. Of the 25,000 cases decided in the year to June this year, only 1,100 people were granted asylum – less than 5 per cent.

The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 has already dramatically cut the number of refugees being allowed to stay

in the UK from 20,000 in 1992 to 5,000 in 1994.

Claude Moraes, director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, described the asylum element of the Bill as "one of the most irresponsible pieces of legislation in recent years". He said the drawing up of a "white list" of supposedly safe countries would result in the very real possi-

bility of asylum seekers being sent home to face torture, persecution or even death.

Narendra Makanji, chairman of the Anti-Racist Alliance, added that unions and immigrant welfare groups would unite to defeat the Bill. "This Bill is undoubtedly a curtain-raiser for a Tory racist campaign in the run-up to the next election," he said.

Vouchers 'may cost more than places'

NURSERY SCHEME
FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Plans to offer nursery vouchers to the parents of all four-year-olds could cost more in administration fees than in funding extra places for children.

Last night Labour's education spokesman, David Blunkett, said a pilot scheme in just four local authorities would cost £5m in administration fees – more than the £4.95m cost of offering an extra 4,500 places in those areas. The bulk of the total £22m cost would go on paying for existing nursery places.

So far, the London Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth and Westminster have signed up for the scheme. Norfolk has provisionally agreed to take part, and Buckinghamshire is also considering it, but the pilot, due to begin in April 1996 has been boycotted by the majority of local authorities.

Mr Blunkett accused ministers of bending to right-wing rhetoric instead of following common-sense policies. "Instead of tackling the real issues, the Government has lurches to the right so much that it is only interested in introducing the extremist cast-offs from right-wing think tanks."

The legislation to be introduced would give all parents a voucher with which they could purchase nursery education in either the public or the private sector. There will be no means-testing for those who wish to join the scheme.

All schools participating in the scheme would have to meet certain minimum standards, and would be inspected regularly.

Church protest delays opt-out plans

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Proposals to include clauses in the bill creating a fast-track for church schools to become grant-maintained without a parental ballot have been delayed after fierce opposition from Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops.

The Department for Education and Employment said yesterday that it was still consulting on the plans. Anglican bishops will fight any proposals when they reach the House of Lords. They say church school parents should have the same right to vote on opting out as county school parents.

The Bishop of Coventry, the Right Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, said earlier this week that the plans were incompatible

EDUCATION

with the Christian message because they gave church schools a privileged position and disadvantaged other schools.

The Prime Minister announced his support for a fast-track for church schools to opt out in a speech in July as a way of making opting out more attractive. John Major said governors should be able to take the decision without consulting parents.

But even a church leader who is a member of the Government quango on opting out has condemned the plan.

Canon Gerald Greenwood, Southwark's diocesan director of education and a member of the Funding Agency for Schools board, has written to church school heads to say that his

board believes that the removal of the requirement to hold a parental ballot is "highly undesirable... Where a school has gone grant-maintained, the success of such a venture depends on the continued support of the parents and a vote will have given clear evidence of their position".

The Church of England's board of education is expected to back this viewpoint. Church officials are also strongly opposed to the idea in the Government consultation paper that all schools should be made grant-maintained unless they opt to remain with the local authority.

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, has extended the consultation period on church schools after protests from gov-

ernors. Her department said that ministers had neither ruled in nor out any of the options.

There were only 15 ballots in 4,000 voluntary-aided or church schools on grant-maintained status between August 1994 and August 1995 and only six voted to opt out.

The grant-maintained schools Bill will allow opted out schools to borrow against their assets, thought to be worth about £2bn.

They will also be able to keep all the money for selling off assets instead of giving half to local authorities as they do at present.

Critics say schools will start to sell off their playing fields and that the plans are not compatible with the Prime Minister's determination to promote sport.



Gillian Shephard: extended the period for consultation

Single parents to lose council house priority

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Lone parents and families with children are to lose their priority claim to a council house under a Housing Bill which will provide a new right to buy for housing association tenants.

The move comes as single parents face a freeze in Lone Parent Premium and One Parent Benefit in the Budget. In addition, the £5.20 a week premium, which is part of Income Support, is expected to be abolished for new cases.

The Queen's Speech confirms, however, that Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, has won his battle not to abolish the universal One Parent Benefit for new cases – a move which would have required primary legislation and which Mr Lilley feared might not get through the Commons, given the Government's slim majority.

Under the housing legislation, councils will only have to house the homeless in temporary accommodation, and they will be told to redesign their allocation schemes so that people declared statutorily homeless do not jump the queue for permanent accommodation ahead of others on the waiting list – for example, couples who may not yet have children but who live in substandard accommodation.

Ministers claim such a move

SOCIAL SECURITY

will "reflect the underlying values of society" and balance housing needs "against the need to support married couples who take a responsible approach to family life".

But while the Government argues that will be fairer, the two main local authority associations yesterday claimed it would spell "misery" for homeless people and their children. The Chartered Institute of Housing said the Government was putting at risk the positive proposals in the planned Bill by persisting with the homelessness proposals.

The legislation will include giving tenants the right to buy new homes built by housing associations and grants worth between £8,000 and £16,000, which will enable some housing association tenants to buy their existing homes. Houses built in communities of fewer than 3,000 people will be exempt, however, to ensure that associations can continue to build in rural areas without the stock being lost for local people.

Commercial providers are to be allowed to compete for housing association grants and a string of measures are aimed at bringing more private money into social housing. These include setting up local housing companies which can use private finance to take over council houses.

In addition, new Housing

Investment Trusts will be created in which breaks against capital gains and corporation tax will be used to encourage financial institutions to invest in homes for rent.

The Bill will, however, end mandatory renovation grants, producing a system which the Government claims will be more flexible. Housing associations and others, however, fear the Budget will cut housing investment heavily. The local authority associations said the effect would be to "push the country into a spiral of worsening housing conditions in the private sector".

All social landlords – housing associations, the new private social landlords and those who take over council housing – are expected to be made subject to the Housing Association Tenants' Ombudsman, who already operates on a voluntary basis, but who will now be given statutory powers.

Other measures will make letting easier for small landlords and create a statutory right to adjudication in disputes over construction contracts. The arrangements for registering architects will also be simplified.

A Community Care (Direct Payments) Bill will allow the disabled to buy their own packages of care through cash grants from local authorities. The Bill will allow local authorities to decide whether or not to use their powers.

Banks are sceptical over loan scheme

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

A question mark hung over the Government's plans to privatise student loans last night as banks expressed scepticism about taking part.

Ministers hope to save up to £1bn a year by persuading financial institutions to take on most of the cost of student loans.

The existing Student Loans Company would continue to offer loans to students who wanted them, but it is hoped

STUDENT GRANTS

that the banks might be prepared to take much of the risk and expense in order to win a higher share of student business.

Talks with the High Street banks are still continuing, but last night they displayed little enthusiasm.

The present scheme, which was launched in 1990, was originally intended to involve the banks but they pulled out because they did not believe it would be profitable.

Last night a spokeswoman for

Barclays said it had not yet committed itself to the latest plans. "We have made it very clear that any arrangement to run a scheme would have to be run on a commercial basis," she said.

Other banking sources suggested last night that ministers would have preferred to hand over the whole scheme to the banks, but that they would not accept any such arrangement.

They added that the level of unpaid debt, caused by defaulters and by graduates on low incomes deferring payment, was too high. Figures published

earlier this week showed that of the £1.29bn so far lent to students, only £70m has been repaid.

The banks would have to offer loans to students at no more than the inflation-level interest rate currently offered by the loan company. However, they might be able to offer discounts for faster repayment or repayment over a longer period than the company.

Last night David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said the changes would create a "two-tier" loans system with

students who were considered to be a high financial risk being forced to borrow from the loan company. What was needed was a thorough review of student maintenance, he said.

In Scotland, the Government published plans to establish a joint examinations board to offer both academic and vocational qualifications. It also plans to end requirements for local authorities north of the border to obtain the secretary of state's permission before embarking on large-scale school building projects.

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THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

Nursery Education Bill

A limited pilot scheme for vouchers worth £1,100, which parents of four-year-olds could spend on a part-time place at a local council nursery school, a private school or a pre-school playgroup. To be extended nationwide months before the 1997 election.

Political punch: big battle over education choice when election "bribe" arrives

Real importance: matters a lot to 150,000 four-year-olds presently not at nursery school

Criminal Trials Bill

Defence lawyers would have to disclose broad outline of their case in advance of trials. Liberal lawyers hate it, but barristers Straw and Blair have no problem with much of it. Insofar as it is designed to stop so-called "ambush defences" - where defendants waste court time with last-minute stories - it is sensible.

Political punch: Howard wants to portray the opposition as soft on criminals, but they're not playing

Real importance: Could speed up court proceedings

Housing Bill

Lone mothers would not get priority for council housing. Labour will try to avoid seeming to defend feckless young women who allegedly get pregnant to get a home, and will point out that families with children are also hit.

Political punch: Strong issue for Tory moral majoritarians, but Blair's not keen on parents who choose to go it alone either

Real importance: Depends on detail, but could increase homelessness

Security Service Bill

MIS would adopt a role against organised crime, to bolster Tory claims to be tough on drug dealers. Goes with steps towards a national police force, the so-called "new FBI". There's nothing to suggest how MIS officers would be accountable - they'd still give evidence behind screens.

Political punch: Tories will revel in crack force of secret service agents, Labour will oppose secrecy

Real importance: Redirection of security forces from terrorism



Mackay links divorce and home violence

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, will today re-introduce a version of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence legislation introduced by Tory backbenchers, tacked on to the divorce reform proposals and given a gloss of "family values".

As revealed in the *Independent* last week, the two pieces of legislation have both survived as the "Family Law Bill", a title designed to give the impression it supports rather than erodes the institution of marriage. The Lord Chancellor hopes they will pass on a free vote to come into force by July.

Both parts of the legislation hear the scars of the conflicts with the family values wing of the party which threatened their chances of becoming law. The divorce reforms, which abolish the concept of fault and seek to encourage mediation rather than adversarial litigation, show how Lord Mackay has made accommodations to gain the support of solicitors who had feared a loss of business to the mediators.

The Bill makes it clear that mediation is only for those divorces where both partners choose it, and that legal aid for lawyers' advice and representation will still be available. A compulsory information session stressing the benefits of mediation or marriage guidance may now be replaced by a much looser interview or video presentation sent to the home.

But legal aid will be extended to pay for mediation as well as lawyers, and courts and solicitors will be encouraged to refer couples to mediation. The amended homes and violence legislation was supposed to have been a series of unifying measures which tidied up existing case law and ironed out anomalies over the rights of partners to live in homes when there is a dispute.

But backbenchers, who dubbed it the "live-in lovers Bill", were furious that it appeared to be giving new rights to cohabitants.

The Bill to be introduced today pays lip service to these worries. There will be a general clause requiring courts to "have regard to the fact that people who are cohabiting have not made the same commitment as people who are married".

The Married Women's Property Act of 1882 will not be extended to cohabitants; cohabitants will have slightly less right to have a violent partner evicted from the family home than if the couple were married; and where a violent partner has been excluded from the home, the exclusion can only last up to a year under the new Bill, while under existing law and the old proposals the exclusion could be regularly renewed. The time limitation only applies to cohabitants, not to married couples, and is expected to affect only a handful of cases a year.

Tory backbenchers had wanted to amend the Bill so that partners could only be excluded if they caused "physical" harm, but the Bill retains "mental harm" as well.

The divorce reform will be the first big shake-up of the law for 25 years, and the first this century to be introduced by a government rather than as a private members' Bill. It had provoked widespread concern within the Tory party that the Government appeared to be undermining the institution of marriage by abolishing the concept of fault as the grounds for a divorce.

Faced with the row, some senior Conservative figures feared it was too controversial to be introduced in a legislative programme in the run-up to a general election. They argued ultimately unsuccessfully - that it appeared to make divorce easier, and undermined the Tories' reputation as the party of the family.

The willingness of the Lord Chancellor to demonstrate flexibility over the involvement of solicitors has already won their public backing for the Bill.

Yesterday, Hilary Siddle, chairwoman of the Law Society's family law committee, said: "I hope that improvements to the detail of the Government's proposals will be possible through constructive dialogue between the Government and family lawyers, who understand how the current system works and what improvements are necessary."

The other Bills

NHS ombudsman's powers increased

The Health Service Ombudsman is to be allowed to investigate clinical complaints against doctors and nurses in the most significant change to his powers since the office was created 23 years ago. His jurisdiction is also to be extended from hospitals to cover more than 50,000 GPs, dentists, pharmacists and those who provide NHS optical services. The change is the culmination of a 20-year campaign to broaden the ombudsman's powers beyond just investigating "maladministration" by hospitals and health authorities. It follows mounting criticism of the way the NHS has handled clinical complaints against doctors but coincides with a change of attitude by the British Medical Association.

Army reservists to get enhanced role

The Reserve Forces Bill changes archaic laws about using Britain's 255,000 reserves to support the increasing number of military operations which Britain is carrying out in peacetime. The Bill will mainly affect the Army's 195,000 ex-regulars and 60,000 Territorial Army members. It will bring in a new power to call up reserves for humanitarian aid, disaster relief and peace-keeping operations, like those in Bosnia and last year's operation in Rwanda, and new measures to safeguard reservists' civilian jobs if they are called up.

Fast-track for less serious libel cases

A Defamation Bill which would introduce new summary procedures to enable judges to deal quickly with straightforward and less serious libel actions. The Bill would offer new defences to defendants who were willing to offer an apology or compensation - including damages assessed by a judge - to the plaintiff.

Chemical weapons production outlawed

The Chemical Weapons Bill is Britain's "instrument of ratification" to fulfil its obligations under the October 1993 international Chemical Weapons Treaty, which has been signed by 159 countries. The treaty will come into force six months after 65 states have ratified it. The Bill will make it an offence to develop, produce, process or transfer chemical weapons - poison gases and droplets - or build any facility to do so. It will also be an offence to help anyone else make such weapons.

Blair dismisses 'rag-bag ideas to save Tories'

STEPHEN GOODWIN

Tony Blair dismissed the Queen's Speech as a "pathetic mouse", a rag-bag of right-wing ideas designed only to secure the survival of the Conservative Party.

In a testy response, John Major accused the Labour leader of "a remarkable, chameleon-like ability to change political colour, depending on the audience" and commended the "common-sense" policies of the speech.

"Our legislative programme is the right programme for this country. It will also be a litmus test for the Opposition," the Prime Minister said.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said it was a programme of "rag-end measures from a rag-end Government". The real event that mattered would be the Budget in two weeks' time. "This Government has nothing further to say to the nation, except 'please vote for us because we are going to give you tax cuts'."

With the party political game being played in earnest by both sides of the House, Mr Blair seized the initiative when it became apparent Government whips had instructed backbenchers to harrack him but not to try and intervene.

"What a pathetic bunch they are," the Labour leader taunted. "To think that these people can keep themselves in government for another 18 months is a tragedy for this country."

Opening on the common ground of Northern Ireland, Mr Blair promised continued support for the Government so long as Labour believed ministers were acting in good faith in the search for peace.

But he found the rest of the Queen's Speech "utterly irrelevant" to the interests of Britain. "It is all about the interests of the Tory party, cobbling together any old bric-a-brac of legislation that can keep the Conservative Party in one piece." The only way this could be done was by "appealing" the right, he said. "It is as far from one-nation politics as it is possible to imagine."

COMMONS DEBATE

He pointed out the curiosity of Tuesday's press briefing on the speech given by Brian Mawhinney, chairman of the Conservative Party, rather than by the Leader of the House, as was traditional, or a minister.

Mr Mawhinney had "given the game away" by claiming the purpose of the Queen's Speech was to smoke out Labour. "Not to provide new energy or ideas or vitality for Britain, but to help the people of Britain but to play a game in the run up to the election," Mr Blair said.

The speech made no real recognition of the state of Britain - 35th in the world in education standards and down from 13 to 18 in the economic league. Yet the Government had benefited by £120bn from North Sea oil and £80bn from privatisation. "People often say about the Conservatives, they may be cruel but they're competent. This is an economic record of shame. They are cruel and incompetent in equal measure."

Turning to the Asylum and Immigration Bill, Mr Blair said Labour opposed bogus applications and fraud and recognised the need for immigration controls. But to Tory protests he said race and immigration should not be "the playing of party politics". He called for the Bill to go before a Commons special committee "and let it be a genuine consensual exercise in getting at the truth."

But the Prime Minister said he did not immediately find himself attracted to the idea of a special committee - which would be able to hear witnesses and take evidence.

The only party playing the race card was Labour, he insisted. "Britain has always opened its doors to those who are in genuine need of asylum but our current system of asylum has been abused."

This year 40,000 claims for asylum would be made, he said. "Only a small number are likely to succeed and they deserve to be decided speedily."

Mr Major promised free

votes on matters of conscience in the Bill on divorce and domestic violence and announced that he would be asking the European Union to help Caribbean states stem the flow of drugs from Latin America.

In repeated personal attacks, he mocked Mr Blair's use of "cheap soundbites" yet went on to hammer away with the Tories own favourite soundbite of Labour as "unfit to govern".

The Labour leader's speech was "humbly at its very worst", Mr Major said. "It was what we have come to expect from him - cheap soundbites and no indication of his real policy substance, if he has any at all."

He said the Budget would show the Government's determination to turn Britain into the "enterprise centre of Europe". It would be consistent with sound public finance and a resolve to move further towards a more enterprising economy.

"We have brought public spending under control. We will reduce it further," he said. "And when prudent, we will cut taxes on companies and on individuals."

Labour would increase spending, put up taxes, let inflation rip and discourage investment with more red tape, Mr Major said. "Policies like these do not add up to a credible programme of opposition, let alone of government. They add to the reason why Labour are unfit to govern."

John Redwood, the unsuccessful Tory leadership challenger, reiterated his call for £5bn tax cuts and criticised the Government on law and order.

"Too many criminals are getting away without being detected, too many criminals seem to be able to get through a trial when the evidence looks quite strong against them," he said.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, had to look at the balance again. "People are worried about the security of their jobs, and their homes and their families and it is those issues which this Queen's Speech followed by the Budget must tackle and must be seen to be tackling in a way which meets the mood of the times," he said.



Full house: The Queen delivering her Speech in the Lords Photograph: John Stillwell/PA

TV market to be opened up ahead of 'digital revolution'

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The Government yesterday confirmed it would introduce a radical new Broadcasting Bill to "extend choice and competition" in the UK media industry.

The effect will be to relax rules governing cross-ownership among newspaper, television and radio companies and to pave the way for the introduction of digital terrestrial television within two years.

The Bill, based in part on two White Papers published earlier this year, will be tabled at the end of the month.

A last-ditch lobbying campaign is expected from media companies aimed at overturning some key proposals in the Government's original plans.

The White Paper on Media Ownership, published in May, proposed new rules that would allow greater cross-holdings among newspapers, television and radio companies. It would free newspaper groups, with the exception of the two biggest, Rupert Murdoch's News In-

MEDIA OWNERSHIP

ternational and the Mirror Group, to control broadcasters for the first time.

The White Paper on Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting, released in August, proposed complicated rules for the introduction of new digital TV services, bringing as many as 20 new "over-the-air" channels to UK homes, but only if television sets are fitted with special decoders.

Existing terrestrial broadcasters - the BBC, ITV, and Channel 4, along with the planned Channel 5 - would be guaranteed a place in the digital future.

Digital plans have already been criticised by many commercial media companies and by the BBC, which have argued in submissions to Mrs Bottomley that her proposals are unwelcome.

Specifically, they believe the Government's preference to award licences for "multiplexes" of up to three digital channels to commercial middlemen

would put broadcasters at a disadvantage.

They also call on the Government to set a firm schedule for the transition from traditional analog television to digital, claiming that the investment necessary to launch the new services will only be forthcoming if the timetable is known in advance.

For its part, the BBC has also asked that a multiplex be set aside solely for the use of the public service broadcaster.

Views on the Government's plans to reform cross-media ownership rules received a mixed response when they were unveiled last May.

Companies such as Associated Newspapers, publishers of the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening Standard*, welcomed the Government's decision to allow newspaper groups to control television broadcasters, subject to a ceiling of 15 per cent of the total television market.

But both Mr Murdoch's News International and the Mirror Group were highly critical of the limits placed on

companies which already control at least 20 per cent of the national newspaper market.

Several ITV companies, including MAL, the conglomerate which controls Anglia Television and Meridian, also complained about the Government's refusal to lift the limit of two ITV licences that can be held by a single company.

The City still expects the limits to be lifted, perhaps by the time the draft legislation is tabled, in two weeks' time.

The shares of some ITV companies have risen sharply on expectations that large commercial broadcasters will be able to own more than two licences.

Small media companies are concerned that they will be swamped by broadcasting giants when digital TV arrives.

A spokesman for the Department of National Heritage said yesterday that the Government had reflected on the advice provided by the industry, but gave no indication as to whether the proposals would be changed.

STEPHEN WARD

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is to go ahead with changes to the rules on disclosure of evidence to prevent what the police see as unfair defence "ambushes" of the prosecution in court.

They will make the defence disclose more of its case earlier and allow the prosecution to hold back more of its evidence until later. Solicitors and barristers fear the changes may lead to miscarriages of justice unless stringent safeguards are included. The details will not be revealed until later this week.

The proposals, which were instigated after police pressure on Mr Howard, are intended to make it harder for defendants to introduce plausible but false defences at the last minute.

They also protect from disclosure to defendants sensitive information such as the names of informants and details of intelligence operations. Senior police officers have complained that they have had to abandon cases in order to protect informants.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

Under the new Criminal Procedure and Investigations Bill there will be three stages to the disclosure procedure: the prosecution would first release unused material which might undermine its case; in response, the defence would, for the first time, have to disclose information about its case to narrow the issues in dispute.

Finally, the prosecution would give any additional unused material which might assist the defence case.

Under the present law, the prosecution is obliged to disclose almost all its unused material to the defence.

The Bill will also introduce a Code of Practice for the police which will cover what materials they would be obliged to preserve and to make available to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Another section of the Bill will provide judges with powers to order a preparatory hearing in a long and complex case if it was thought there would be significant benefits.

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news

Police sting led to return of stolen masterpiece

REBECCA FOWLER

The trial into the theft of the *The Scream*, Edvard Munch's £35m masterpiece, switched from Oslo in Norway, to London this week to discover how Scotland Yard won back the painting for the Norwegians after it was stolen in one of the most dramatic art thefts in recent decades.

British police revealed yesterday they how they launched an undercover operation to recover *The Scream* in a carefully planned sting at a Norwegian hotel, after a tip-off from a British solicitor who had been contacted by one of the thieves.

The operation was carried out by two undercover officers known as Sidney Walker and Chuck Roberts, who posed as art experts representing the J Paul Getty Museum to set up a bogus £315,000 deal.

They gave statements during a two-day hearing at Bow Street magistrates' court in central London to protect their identities because under Norwegian law witnesses cannot give evidence anonymously.

John Butler, former head of Scotland Yard's Fine Art Squad, masterminded the operation with Norwegian police, after a secret meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March 1994.

"These two officers are the most experienced undercover officers in the United Kingdom, and they had done dozens of operations throughout the world," Mr Butler said yesterday.

"We had to have a very fluid plan... The trick is to protect undercover officers, don't lose the money, and try to achieve your objective."

The Scream, Norway's most treasured painting, was stolen from the National Gallery in Oslo in February 1994.

Two men used a step ladder to climb into the gallery, grabbed the painting and then disappeared.

The thieves demanded a

£690,000 ransom for the work, completed in 1893, which depicts a wait-like figure gasping with angst beneath a blood red sky, but the Norwegian government refused to agree to their demands.

When a British solicitor, co-named the London Clue, contacted Mr Butler to say that one of the criminals involved in the theft had contacted him.

Scotland Yard devised a plan, working with Norwegian police, to recapture the painting. Mr Butler worked with Inspector Lief Lise, head of Oslo's serious theft squad.

Last May, Mr Roberts travelled to Oslo, posing as a museum representative. In the Sky Bar bar of the Plaza hotel he met Jan Olsen, one of four men on trial for the theft, and Einar Ulling, a "facilitator" who is not facing charges. There the men discussed a deal.

However, the following day over breakfast Mr Olsen demanded £300,000 for the painting, and a further £15,000 for expenses, and was shown the money, in cash, in a deposit box at the hotel by Mr Walker.

On 7 May, Mr Ulling drove Mr Roberts to his summer house in Aagaardstrand, 55 miles south of Oslo, where the painting was hidden in the cellar. "It was wrapped in a blue bed sheet and we unwrapped it carefully," Mr Roberts said.

"I saw *The Scream* as I have seen it in reproductions. It could tell it was the original and not a copy."

He took the painting back to his hotel room, via the fire escape, while Mr Walker went with two of the alleged thieves to pick up the money.

But the thieves were arrested at the Grand Hotel in Oslo, the meeting point where it was agreed that they would pick up the money, although Mr Walker said he was surprised only two officers had been sent for the bust. He commented that they were carrying a bag which appeared to contain sandwiches.

A star is born: Unknown actor lands lead role in £3m production of 'Tommy'



Pinball wizard: Paul Keating (above) with co-star Gail Easdale and (below) working on the till at Tesco

Photographs: David Sandison

Fame and fortune await teenager from Tesco

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

A £50-a-week part-time worker at Tesco has landed the part of Tommy in the forthcoming west end musical of The Who's rock opera.

Nineteen-year-old Paul Keating, from Romford in Essex, will increase his salary 20 times over when he plays the deaf, dumb and blind pinball wizard in the £3m production at the Shaftesbury Theatre next Spring.

He beat a staggering 7,000 other hopefuls, including seven pop stars with chart hits, and had to sing in 12 auditions.

Paul, who was back in the stock control room at Tesco yesterday, working out his notice before starting rehearsals, has

the dubious advantage of resembling *Tommy's* composer, The Who's Pete Townshend.

The show's producer, André Ptaszynski, said: "There is a passing resemblance to the composer of the piece, Paul has that patrician profile."

He added: "We would have been very happy to have a big name in the part, and we had a number of pop singers, five British and two Australian, but I cannot name them. A couple of them were well over 6ft, which is too tall. *Tommy* needs to suggest something frail. Paul is also a really strong rock tenor with great range and power."

The new star, who sang in his local church choir and has been working at Tesco for the last two years, has played small parts at his local theatre in Ilford and

reads *The Stage*, which is where he saw the advert for the auditions.

Paul said yesterday he had never been a fan of The Who, and had never heard *Tommy* until he applied for the audition. He was more of a Madonna and Björk man.

He added: "I can't wait to get started. I don't really play pinball so I will have to start practising. And Tesco have said I can have my job back if it all fails."

Pete Townshend promised to initiate his new star. He said: "In true leftie-luvvie tradition I'm going to nurture his talent with long sessions of Shepherd's Bush deep background in which Paul will eat jellyed eels, learn to ride a Vespa, discover his inner child and prepare himself to selflessly pay huge tax bills."

'Secret' pro-hunt group to go public

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

A new and powerful pressure group for blood sports and countryside interests will be launched today, after months of secret preparation.

Those involved in founding the Countryside Movement are dominated by the great, the good – and the wealthy. Several of their meetings have taken place at the London offices of the Prince of Wales' Duchy of Cornwall, under the chairmanship of Lord Peel, a leading Duchy office-holder.

One of the prime motivations of supporters is to make it as difficult as possible for a Labour government to ban hunting, using expensive advertising campaigns and mailing millions of potential supporters. Tony Blair has promised a free vote on the issue and the great majority of his MPs will be in favour of a ban.

At today's London launch, they will emphasise that their new organisation is much broader than merely a pro-hunting, shooting and fishing lobby. The main aim is to fight for rural traditions and the rural economy, and for greater understanding of the countryside among an overwhelmingly metropolitan population.

The *Independent* has received leaked minutes of two confidential meetings which have taken place this year.

Among those present have been former *Daily Telegraph* and now *Evening Standard* editor Max Hastings, the Duke of Westminster – one of the wealthiest men in Britain – and the president of the National Farmers' Union, Sir David Nash.

Lord Peel, the initial chairman at early meetings, is a descendant of Britain's most famous huntsman. The executive chairman is Sir David Steel, the former Liberal Party leader who is standing down from the House of Commons at the next election. He has already rented an London office.

The Countryside Movement already has over £200,000 from founder members and hopes it could bring in up to £5m a year, most of which will be spent on campaigning and advertising.

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Guilty verdict 'would make West a victim'

WILL BENNETT

Convicting Rosemary West of murder would add yet another name to the list of her husband Frederick's victims, the jury at Winchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

Not a shred of evidence had been produced to link her with any of the 10 murders with which she is charged and to which Mr West confessed before his death, Richard Ferguson QC, for the defence, said.

"On the one hand, you have the siren voices urging you to convict because Rosemary West is an evil woman, on the other hand, you have your consciences and your oath," Mr Ferguson told the jury in his final speech. "The last thing you would want to live with would be the realisation that you have added yet another victim to the list of Fred West's victims."

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at the Wests' house, 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, and at their previous home in the city. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found hanged in his prison cell on New Year's Day.

Mr Ferguson told the jury that the prosecution had to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that Mrs West was guilty of the murders.

He continued: "You may have come to the conclusion that as a mother and a woman her conduct fell far below that which you might expect ... but

that does not make her guilty of the crimes with which she has been charged.

"When it comes to proof of the actual crimes charged against this woman, they have not got the evidence. Speculation yes, opportunity perhaps, but proof, no, and you cannot convict without proof."

"There is not a shred of direct reliable evidence to show that this defendant was a party to their deaths."

"There is no fingerprint evidence to associate this defendant with their deaths, there is no forensic evidence to associate this defendant with these deaths, there is no eye-witness, there is no confession."

"This is not like the trial of OJ Simpson in America. There are no bloody footprints here, there are no gloves, there is no DNA evidence. You are not being asked by us to acquit in the teeth of the evidence. You are being asked by us to acquit because there is no evidence. All you have is conjecture, suspicion and perhaps prejudice."

Mr Ferguson said that although the jury might regard Mr West as "the very epitome of evil", if jurors believed that what he said in police interviews might have been true then they must return a not guilty verdict.

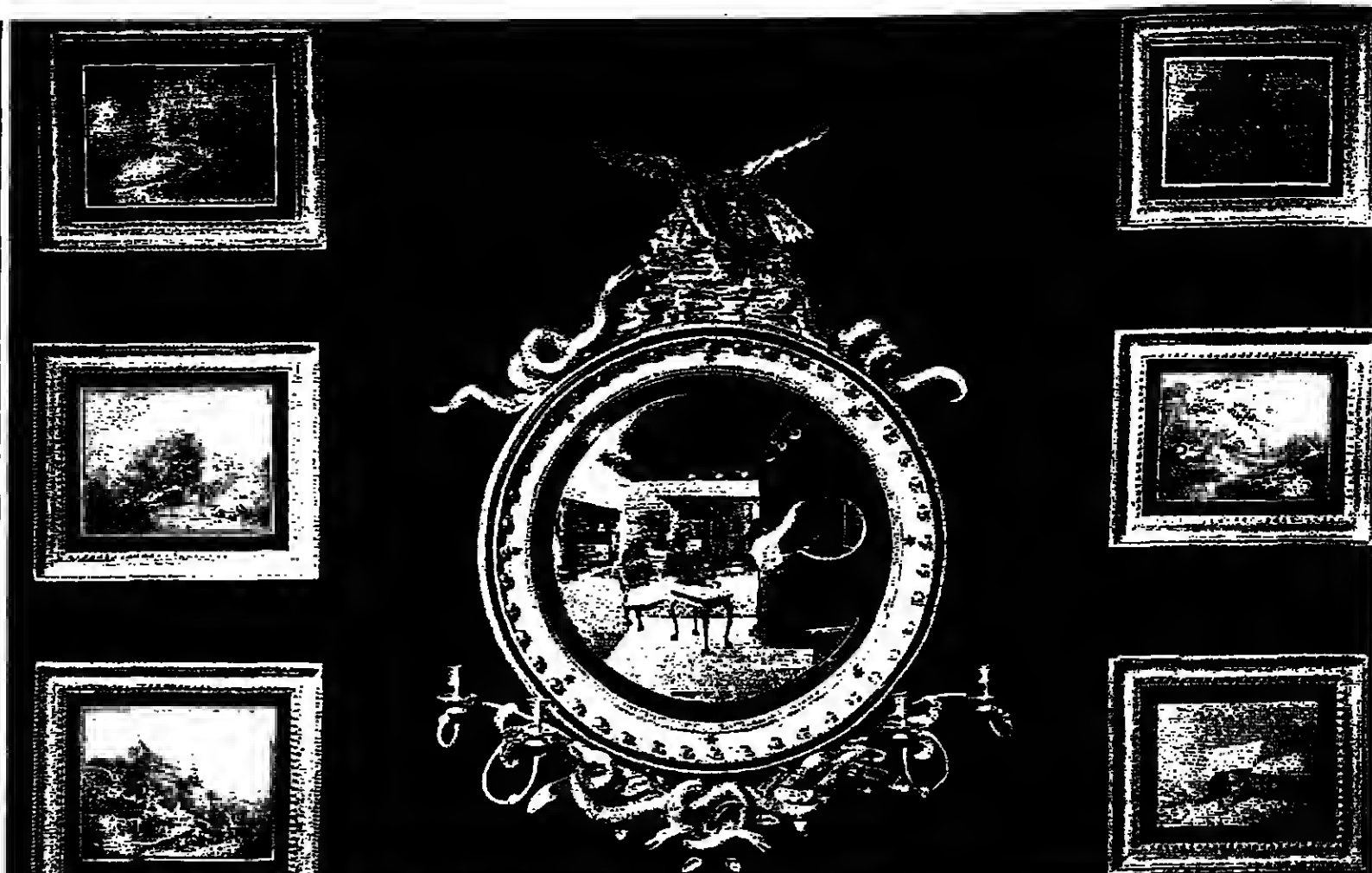
"We accept that the recordings you heard were not the comprehensive truth. Nevertheless the broad thrust of what he told the police in those early interviews was, we say, essentially correct. Rosemary West was not a party to these

killings. We accept that Fred West was a liar, that he was a depraved and morally bankrupt human being, if you can honour him with the title of human being, but what he said in those interviews has the kernel of truth," he said.

"Once you accept that Fred West or Fred West and somebody other than Rosemary West could have killed without her knowledge, then that is the end of the Crown case. That is an end to the prosecution. Fred West was an evil, corrupt maniac who was able to follow his career of aggression without any assistance from this defendant."

"The real issue is not whether Mrs Rosemary West had an unconventional sex life, but whether or not the Crown has proved her guilty of murder."

The trial continues today when the judge, Mr Justice Mantell, will begin his summing up.



Reflected glory: A Regency giltwork convex mirror catches the hanging of an antique mirror at the week-long Fine Art and Antiques Fair at Olympia in London which began yesterday. Among other pieces is an 1819 silver gilt soup tureen valued at £1m. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Young poets put trust in future

JOJO MOYES

Poet Roger McGough was among the judges who yesterday selected 10 poems from almost 14,000 entries in the National Trust's "Saving Places" poetry competition.

Young people under 16 were invited to write about what they would like to see saved for the benefit of people now and in the future as part of the trust's centenary celebrations.

Sally Bacon, one of the competition's organisers, said that the judges had been stunned by the quality of the entries. "We were delighted with the standard. Most of the judges, many of whom regularly judge poetry competitions, were amazed by the fact that they were written by people under the age of 16," she said.

Conserving plant or animal life was the most popular subject, attracting a quarter of all entries, closely followed by global issues and pollution.

The three joint winners in the eight and under category were Rachel Jones from Weymouth, Dorset; Edward Goodacre, of Ripon, North Yorkshire; and James Winterbourne, from Maples, in Cheshire.

Winner of the nine-13 category was Katie-Ellen McCrory from Salisbury, with a poem called *Fieldwalking*, published below. She was followed by Melissa Dawes, from Ripon, and Robert Goss from Suffolk.

The joint winners of the 13-15 category were Karen White, of Ashford, Kent; Sophie Mills, of Putney, south London; and Ciara McKenna, of Clydebank, Scotland. The Welsh winner was Llywelyn Ifans, from Blaenpenall.

Prizes of National Trust gift vouchers were awarded to the winners by the actor Tony Robinson at a ceremony yesterday at Eureka! The Museum for Children, in Halifax.

An anthology of the winning poems will be published in March next year.

DAILY POEM

Fieldwalking

(the recently discovered site of a Roman villa in Tockenhall village)

By Katie-Ellen McCrory

My eyes dance from edge to edge
Scanning.

The ploughed field, heaps of earth
Mounds like hills, hide small clues.

My eyes glance from edge to edge
Sweeping.

I walk past the ghost of the Roman villa
Where shadows mark the vanished walls
My hands weary and stained with dirt
I pick at grey, blue and terracotta
Sniff my pockets with history's broken pieces.

Sifting through,
I catch a signal
As the sun flashes like an S.O.S.
From a latent field mirror.
MAYDAY!

A fallen plane, a sinking ship
The last survivor clinging to the wreck.
A bright thing digs its way out
From beneath the collapse of centuries.

I turn it to the light
A stone cat's claw sits in my palm.
A flint scraper
Sharp edged

to scour for fur from skins
Which hung in caves, long before the Romans arrived
To build their roads.

This flint confronts me.
Prehistory sits in my palm
This, the oldest tool working before the Romans
And is still sharp.
It cuts this paper, these words.

Katie-Ellen McCrory, from Salisbury in Wiltshire, won the 9 to 13-year-old age group in the National Trust's "Saving Places" poetry competition.

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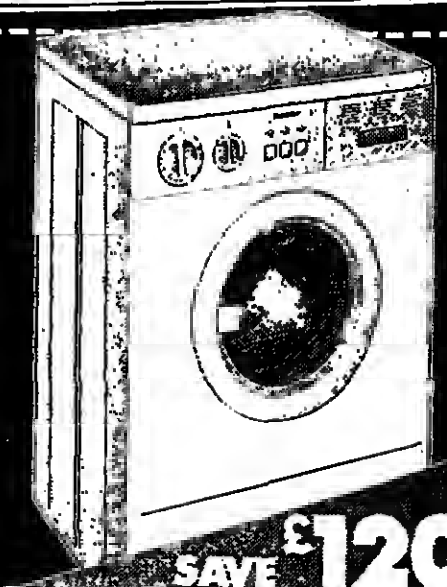
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Dorrell poised to unveil 'private' NHS hospitals

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The first schemes in which the private sector will design, build, finance and operate entire hospitals for the NHS are to be announced shortly – probably in the Budget – despite a renewed Labour charge that the Government is progressively privatising the NHS.

But in a keynote speech, in which he is expected to underline that private finance is to be the dominant way that new NHS facilities are built, Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, is expected to set limits to the exercise.

In his address to the Royal College of Physicians next week, Mr Dorrell will say that core clinical services – broadly those provided by doctors and nurses – will not be included in the new schemes.

Some clinical support services which involve doctors – pathology and radiology – will form part of the early private finance deals in the NHS, which include a £100m 700-bed rede-

velopment of the Norfolk and Norwich hospital, a £20m 150-bed unit at St James's hospital, Leeds, a £26m scheme for a new acute hospital at Bishop Auckland in County Durham, and a £16m redevelopment at two sites in south Buckinghamshire.

But with few private bidders showing any interest in supplying full clinical services, Mr Dorrell is to make a virtue of reality and rule out complete private provision of an NHS hospital for the time being.

His aim is to defuse renewed Labour charges that "core" hospital services are being privatised, with Alan Milburn, Labour's new health spokesman, yesterday listing 34 contracts under which services have been taken away from NHS provision and handed over to private companies.

The deals include pathology at the Leicestershire Mental Health Trust, some forms of radiology at Oldham and Park hospitals and ophthalmology in south Devon. The private sector has also won six contracts for sterile supplies, six for lin-

fitting, four for occupational health and six for patient appliances. A big new deal involving private provision of pathology for hospitals in north London is also thought to be near completion.

"Bit by bit, the health service is being handed over to the private sector," Mr Milburn said. "Yesterday it was portering, today it is pathology and tomorrow it will be paediatrics."

The limit Mr Dorrell will set will still leave the private sector providing, financing and running entire buildings – everything except mainstream treatment – providing all the back-up services from laundry and cleaning to building maintenance and security, together with a range of other functions.

Kingsley Manning, managing director of Newchurch, which runs a private finance database for the NHS Executive, said an "explosion" of private building was about to occur, with the likelihood that £2bn worth of schemes would be in the pipeline by the time of the next general election.

Tradition under threat: Fishermen claim licence charges will hurt livelihood



Fish run: Den Chadwick, an Exe netsman, prepares his equipment as his family has done for centuries

Photograph: Tom Pilton

Salmon families get sinking feeling

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

The 18 families which carry on the traditional pursuit of netting salmon on the river Exe in Devon claim they will be forced out by a huge hike in fees proposed by the National Rivers Authority.

The salmon are netted near Topsham, a village that centuries ago was a major port and fishing centre but is now a commuter suburb of Exeter. The salmon fishing is regarded as one of the few remaining links with the village's historical past.

Many of the families have fished for generations. Now, though, the NRA proposes to increase the licence fee from

£120 a year to £1,619 in a move to regulate charges nationally. The increases will be phased in, but the fishermen say the living to be made is already precarious and the new fee will make it uneconomic.

Den Chadwick, secretary of River Exe Netsmen, said not all rivers were as lucrative as others and the NRA policy to have national charges was flawed. The NRA claims large increases are needed because the Government has nearly halved its national fisheries grant in the last four years and wants the costs of the service to be recovered as fully as possible from those who benefit.

Mr Chadwick said: "Our fish-

ing is vitally important, not only financially, but because it is a way of life for many families and has been so for hundreds of years. This is part of our heritage and if these charges go through, that history will be wiped out."

He remembers 1987 as a good year with 4,000 fish caught, but last year, few boats averaged more than 100 fish. With the possible income so variable he believes few will commit themselves to the cost of a new licence.

Also, salmon farming has meant that prices for salmon have not risen in the last 10 years. "I have been fishing here for 45 years. There used to be

a waiting list, but not anymore. I will be fishing next year because the fee has only been doubled and we can live with that, but in the long term I fear the end is near."

There are already tight rules governing the fishing and a suspicion among the netsmen that many with vested interests would prefer to see them off the river and their places taken by more lucrative "rod and line" fishermen who pay well and catch little – a charge the NRA denies.

The season runs from February to August and fishing can only take place on weekdays. One fisherman stands on shore with a rope, while a boat

rows out trailing a net. When the boat lands this forms a half circle, which is dragged in. Hopefully the salmon are trapped in the net.

The River Exe Netsmen say they believe the spawning beds of the salmon 40 miles up river on Exmoor would suffer if the netting stopped, because too many salmon would be trying to breed. They claim the netting is a valuable culling that safeguards future fish stocks. The fishermen also have a role in discouraging poachers.

They have been in touch with counterparts in Cornwall and hope other similar bodies will join forces to try and overturn the NRA proposals.

Care to be improved for victims of crime

GLENDIA COOPER

New guidelines for treating the victims of crime will be issued to doctors and nurses after some complained they were treated unsympathetically.

Home Office research has shown that less than 50 per cent of violent crime is reported to the police and for many victims their only contact with the authorities is when they receive treatment for their injuries.

Victims have complained that they were treated in an insensitive or judgmental way, adding to their distress.

The booklet gives a checklist for doctors, including documenting injuries, looking for signs of sexual assault and safeguarding clothing that may be necessary for forensic evidence.

It also lists possible signs of domestic violence, how to make a written report, the effect of post-traumatic stress disorder and who is most likely to be at risk of different crimes.

At the launch of the booklet, *Treating Victims of Crime*, which will be issued free to all GPs and accident and emergency departments, the charity Victim Support yesterday outlined some cases where the victims' ordeal had been exacerbated by the treatment they had received from medical staff.

A woman store detective who had been stabbed by a thief who said the hypodermic needle was infected with Aids was then told by her doctor to "pull herself together" and given no information.

A young man seriously injured in an armed robbery was told by his GP that the consultant who had dealt with him had written on the discharge note that "the victim had provoked the attack by challenging the robber".

The director of Victim Support, Helen Reeves, said: "There are many victims who never tell anyone what has happened to them but they do seek medical help. It is essential that these people are treated with sensitivity and understanding and that they are told what other sources of help are available to them."

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Presidential poll in Algeria: Massive operation mounted to prevent Islamist suicide bombers wrecking today's election

Algiers smothered in blanket of security

ROBERT FISK
Algiers

"If they're going to do something, they'll do it today," Commandant Mohamed of Algeria's Gendarmerie Nationale said it without emotion, as if making a station announcement or forecasting uncertain weather.

The two policemen in the jeep with us checked their Kalashnikovs and stared through the windows. Algiers looked a pretty, deceptive city, all sunlight and *pied noir* apartments and balconies floating above the Mediterranean, the walls smeared with election posters to remind us of why the day before polling could be the day that the Armed Islamic Group "do something".

We pulled to the side of the motorway near Harrache for a routine shake-down. Young men driving cars and vans were ordered out by the roadside, hands above their heads, papers checked, vehicles prowled over by the gendarmerie. A phalanx of armoured jeeps pulled up behind, their green-uniformed occupants running up the motorway embankments, spilling over into the ground beyond.

By the time I reached them, two officers were looking suspiciously at an abandoned ground-floor apartment. Commandant Mohamed looked at two gas cylinders standing beside the entrance. "Who put them there?" he asked. "Could be for a bomb. Why would anyone leave valuable things like gas cylinders sitting outside an abandoned home? What are they going to be used for?"

A gendarme peered at the bottles and shrugged. A couple of gas cylinders outside a Harrache flat didn't make an insurrection on the day before Algeria's presidential election. It was almost noon, and the flood of supposed Islamist suicide bombers had very definitely not put in an appearance; in fact, it was security that was flooding Algiers — police and paramilitaries and soldiers and plainclothes men on every street corner, every highway intersection. Soaked in security might be the right expression.

"I think things are better than when you were last here — people are tired of terrorism and they want to collaborate with the security forces more



An Algerian gendarme standing guard at a roadblock in the Algiers suburb of Kouba on the eve of the election

Photograph: AFP

than they did," Commandant Mohamed said. "The *garde communale* [volunteer militia-men] have been a great success. People are not afraid to show their feelings against the fundamentalists now. People feel more patriotic." There was no doubt whose side the good commandant was on. Policemen admire Liamine Zeroual, the president who is going to be re-elected today.

We cruised the streets for another half hour, past the near-

deserted French embassy and the equally abandoned home of Abassi Madani, leader of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front. Near Bir Mourad we were waved down by some of Commandant Mohamed's colleagues. One was holding a dirty, slightly rusted pistol. "We found it in that car," he said, pointing down the motorway to where two men — one in a business suit, the other in a black leather jacket — stood guiltily beside a black VW Golf. "He

says he works for the Ministry of Justice, but he doesn't have a permit for the gun." The pistol was light-weight but old, a Chinese 9mm. The metal felt grainy, as if it had just been dug up in a garden — which is evidently what the police officer suspected.

Commandant Mohamed chatted to the better-dressed driver. He had an identification card showing he had permission to use the Club des Pins, the old *nomenklatura* watering hole

outside Algiers, which clearly did not satisfy the commandant's definition of a "terrorist".

Exactly what did was more evident back in the Harrache barracks, where a chart of the gendarmerie's "anti-terrorist struggle" lists an impressive number of Armed Islamic Group (GIA) cells broken, its members killed or arrested, some of them — as the chart significantly recorded — bank officials or doctors or intellectuals.

Between 24 April and last month, in the Harrache area alone, six "terrorists" were shown as dead, 30 arrested, including the local technocrat leader, Mounir Sellaoui.

Police archives record much more fascinating details. Of a group called al-Fidrah, which co-ordinates the assassination of intellectuals, files showed that one group specialised in money and communications.

Its members — a former tax inspector (a certain Rashid

Medani), a bank teller who was playing the international exchanges, a shopkeeper rejoicing in the name of Dumond Boualem and an estate agent renting to other comrades — sent faxes from an architect's home to Paris, Brussels and London.

One GIA fax to Britain this summer was addressed to an Algerian — called Mohamed Denideni (occupation unknown), while others co-ordinated the purchase of cars for

the transport of explosives, cash and men. Yes, the GIA are no longer stealing cars — they are buying them, fitting out members with the real identification papers of long-dead citizens: the GIA has made a habit of seeking information about women whose babies died at birth — and adopting the identity of the dead children 21 years later, a kind of delayed rebirth for anyone seeking anonymity in the streets of Algiers.

But just who owned the white Renault 19 we heard about off the motorway at Dely Ibrahim, we still don't know.

Commandant Mohamed's radio told the story succinctly. "It saw our checkpoint and turned round," the message said. "Why didn't you shoot at it?" "We did, but it got away." We raced down the ring-road. Algiers was being sealed off from the countryside, the police forming a *cordon sanitaire* for election day. The Renault had tried to break into the city. We reached the junction not that far from Chaibia — a village where the commandant and I were ambushed by the GIA last March and there was the gendarme who had fired a machine-gun at the car.

"He went down there," he said, and pointed to a winding hill road. We chased after it, avoiding the man-hole covers — people put bombs under them — and breaking whenever we saw blue-uniformed city police patrols or soldiers. "Did you see a Renault 19 going through here at speed?" Commandant Mohamed would ask. And they all said they hadn't. We crunched up side roads, looking for suspiciously parked white cars. Every street, every intersection seemed to be filled with white Renault 19s. And we were watched all the time by crowds of idle, interested young men.

Of course, we never found the car. It had made a getaway back into the country. "Maybe he was a car bomb — we don't know," Commandant Mohamed said. "They are the greatest danger now. They are the only danger, but we're successful so far." By late afternoon, a phone call reached his office from downtown. "Nothing at all," Commandant Mohamed beamed with delight. Then, just to keep his luck away, he added: "So far."

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UN judge takes aim at Yugoslav warlords

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

The United Nations war crimes tribunal for former Yugoslavia is expected to issue another indictment today, capping a week in which it has taken aim at some of the highest-ranking Serb and Croat commanders in the conflicts. Brushing aside Serb and Croat complaints that this may derail peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, the tribunal is giving notice that political considerations will not deflect it from the application of universal principles of justice.

"What politicians have the moral, legal or political right to forgive people charged with genocide and crimes against humanity, the deaths of tens of thousands of people, without consulting the victims? I just find it abhorrent," the chief UN prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, said on Tuesday in The Hague, where the tribunal is based.

The war crimes under investigation are the worst committed in Europe since 1945, and include the Serb killing of 260 Croats in Vukovar in 1991, the Serb slaughter of thousands of Muslims near Srebrenica last July, and Croat atrocities against Muslims in central Bosnia in 1993.

All those indicted so far are Serbs or Croats, although one Muslim commander from eastern Bosnia, Naser Oric, has been unofficially tipped as a possible suspect.

Officials at the tribunal have indicated they want the long arm of international justice to extend as high as possible up the ladder of the Serbian leadership in Belgrade. In theory, this could mean naming President Slobodan Milosevic, an act that would severely test the world's determination to back the tribunal, as the Serbian leader's co-operation is deemed vital to securing a peace settlement in former Yugoslavia.

A list of the tribunal's suspects reads like a roll-call of the Bosnian Serb, Croatian Serb and Bosnian Croat leadership of the last four years. Those charged include four Serbs who directed the war effort in Bosnia and Croatia - Radovan Karadzic, General Ratko Mladic, Milan Martić and General Mile Mršić - as well as two Bosnian Croat leaders, Dario Kordić and General Tihomir Blaskić.

However, there is one problem. Out of 52 suspects, including 45 Serbs and seven Croats, the tribunal has custody of only one, a Bosnian Serb

karate instructor, Dusan Tadić, whose trial is expected to start early next year.

The tribunal, strongly supported by the United States, says it expects the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian governments to surrender all suspects in their territories. But Croatia's President, Franjo Tudjman, treated the tribunal to a gesture of contempt on Tuesday by giving General Blaskić a job in Croatia's army inspectorate only a day after he had been charged with war crimes against Muslims in central Bosnia.

The move was a slap in the face to Bosnia's Muslim-led government and undermined the case with which the Croats switch between military, political and administrative positions in Croatia and the Croat-controlled Bosnia. The Muslims and Croats signed an agreement in Ohio earlier this month on strengthening co-operation in Bosnia, but the accord looks somewhat hollow in the light of the protection extended by Mr Tudjman to a leading war-crimes suspect.

The US ambassador to Zagreb, Peter Galbraith, warned Croatia yesterday that the treatment of General Blaskić would be an important factor weighing on US relations with Croatia. "The only appointment Mr Blaskić can legally have now is with the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague," the ambassador said.

The Ohio negotiations could run into even deeper trouble over the fate of Mr Karadzic and General Mladic, whom the US and the Bosnian government want removed from power and brought to trial as part of a peace deal. The official Bosnian Serb news service, quoting a source in the Bosnian Serb leadership, said this week that the two men would not withdraw from politics after peace was achieved.

The Belgrade magazine *Nin* reported last weekend that Mr Milosevic had secured the two men's agreement to make a "quiet departure" from public life in return for not being handed over to the UN tribunal. But the US government has flatly rejected any such deal, saying the indictments are not negotiable.

For his part, Mr Goldstone made clear this week that he and his staff would consider resigning rather than see such important suspected war criminals as Mr Karadzic and General Mladic escape trial.

Six leading war-crimes suspects from Bosnia and Croatia wanted by the UN tribunal



Name: Radovan Karadzic
Job: Bosnian Serb political leader.
Present address: Somewhere in Bosnian Serb territory.
Date of indictment: 25 July 1995.
Charge: Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Specifically, he is accused of atrocities perpetrated against civilians throughout Bosnia, including the sniping campaign against residents of Sarajevo. He is also accused of taking UN peace-keepers hostage as human shields.



Name: Ratko Mladic
Job: Military commander of the Bosnian Serbs.
Present address: Somewhere in Bosnian Serb territory.
Date of indictment: 25 July 1995.
Charge: Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Like Mr Karadzic, he is accused of crimes against Bosnian civilians and UN peace-keepers. Accusations include the shelling of a busy cafe area in Tuzla last May and seizure of 284 UN troops this summer in Pale and Gorazde.



Name: Tihomir Blaskic
Job: Bosnian Croat military commander. He was appointed last Tuesday to the rank of inspector in Croatia's army.
Present address: Normally in Bosnian Croat territory, he is now presumed to be heading for Zagreb.
Date of indictment: 13 November 1995.
Charge: Crimes against humanity. Charges against him relate to the same crimes as those of which Mr Karadzic is accused, namely the persecution of Bosnian Muslims in central Bosnia.



Name: Milan Martić
Job: Civilian political leader of the breakaway Croatian Serb mini-state.
Present address: Last heard of in Bosnian Serb city of Banja Luka.
Date of indictment: 25 July 1995.
Charge: Crimes relate to the firing of cluster bombs into central Zagreb last May. The Croatian Serbs launched their rocket attacks on Zagreb, killing six people, as the Croatian army successfully recaptured the Serb-held enclave of western Slavonia.



Name: Dario Kordić
Job: Deputy civilian political leader of self-proclaimed Bosnian Croat mini-state.
Present address: Somewhere in Croat-held territory.
Date of indictment: 13 November 1995.
Charge: Crimes against humanity related to the persecution of Bosnian Muslims on political, racial and religious grounds. The indictment accuses him of such large-scale destruction that almost the entire civilian Muslim population of the Lasva valley in central Bosnia was destroyed in 1993.



Name: Mile Mršić
Job: Serbian officer, later commander of Croatian Serb forces.
Present address: Last heard of in Serb-held Bosnia.
Date of indictment: 9 November 1995.
Charge: Crimes against humanity. Accused of involvement in the massacre of 261 Croats and non-Serbs after the capture of the Croat town of Vukovar in November 1991. The officers are said to have removed the men from the hospital, then taken them to a site near a farm for execution.

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international

EU integration: Proposals could prompt a showdown with Britain

Unity route charted by Paris and Bonn

SARAH HELM
Bonn

Germany and France are preparing a four-point plan for the next round of European integration, including proposals for a single European foreign policy and a call for more immigration and asylum powers to be handed over to Brussels.

It is an attempt to patch up the Paris-Bonn relationship, historically the driving force for European integration. But wide areas of disagreement persist, giving room for Britain to exploit the differences.

The initiative is to be unveiled next month in an attempt to revive the debate over how the European Union should tackle the next phase of reform. Given the failure of other member-states to set a clear agenda, the Franco-German plan is likely to form a negotiating blueprint for next year's "Maastricht Two" inter-governmental conference on EU re-structuring. The plan, agreed in outline this week, could set France and Germany back on a collision course with Britain, which had been given

cause to believe that the drive towards integration was slowing down.

It can take some comfort from the fact that the initiative is not as federalist in its ambitions as Bonn would have liked. Germany is determined to ensure Europe moves towards greater political and monetary union on grounds that without a single political vision, Europe may not create sufficient stability for a single currency to work. But French caution over certain German policy proposals forced Bonn to scale down its original demands. "It is a compromise. It goes further than the French would have wanted but not as far as we would have liked," said a German official.

The Franco-German proposals centre on foreign policy, immigration and border controls, institutional reform and EU democracy and openness. They will be finalised after the Franco-German summit on 7 December.

On foreign-policy integration, the two countries want a new planning unit established within the Council of Ministers

secretariat in Brussels. France wants the EU to appoint a secretary-general for foreign policy but Germany has not so far agreed. The core of the agreed plan is for greater majority voting on foreign policy within the Council of Ministers. Under German proposals, majority voting would be extended, starting with "the most important" areas of EU foreign policy. However, France continues to resist this idea and negotiations are still under way to find a compromise formula.

Under the proposed new voting system, a single country which objected to the majority decision would not be able to block it but would not have to take part in implementation of the decision under what is termed "constructive abstention". The financing of the policy agreed by the majority would, however, come out of EU funds.

Germany also wants to give more decision-making power to the European Commission in areas of immigration and asylum where they believe better co-ordination between member states is vital. The Commission would

draw up laws on visas, and asylum rights and be responsible for ensuring they were enforced. The European Court of Justice would rule on cases where EU law had not been properly applied. But again, France is more reluctant and a decision is still under discussion. In a compromise, Germany has apparently withdrawn its demands that Brussels also be given powers over some police and criminal-justice policies.

The two countries say EU enlargement must bring about more streamlined institutions. The plan calls for the number of commissioners to be cut, with appointment in future "on merit" rather than on the basis of national representation.

Democratic accountability of EU decisions must be increased by giving the European parliament greater powers to oversee policy areas where national parliaments have already transferred authority to Brussels. In other areas where power remains with member-states, national parliaments should play a greater role in checking European policy.

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Window shopping: Any crackdown on illegal foreign prostitutes, who make up most of Amsterdam's window trade, would not be welcomed by local businessmen

The red lights could be out all over Amsterdam

ABI DARUVALLA
Amsterdam

If a strike of Amsterdam prostitutes goes ahead next month it won't be only the red light which will go out in the city's famous sex district.

The brothel operators behind the sex strike are angry over a council crackdown on illegal immigrants working as whores. Local businesses are also afraid such a move would spell the end of the allure of the area and have pledged support for the "lights out" protest.

The crackdown on illegal foreign prostitutes is part of the city's policy to regulate brothels in advance of new legislation to decriminalise the sex industry. As from 1 January, brothel operators in Amsterdam will have to apply for a "tolerance licence" allowing them to ply their trade, as long as certain health and safety regulations are met.

While the brothel operators are not against this policy, they are furious about what they see as a totally impossible demand which calls on them to ensure that no illegal immigrants

are employed as prostitutes. "About 75 per cent of the city's 1,300 window prostitutes are foreign girls who are in the Netherlands illegally," said a spokesman for SOR, representing the brothel operators.

There has been a flood of prostitutes into Amsterdam over the last few years, mainly from South America and, more recently, from eastern Europe.

SOR says: "This has built up over the last decade and they can't expect us to throw these women out onto the street just like that."

"The whole red light district would collapse - which is why other local businesses like local cafes are prepared to join our protest action and turn off their lights."

But Amsterdam council is adamant that the brothel operators are responsible for stamping out illegal employees. "The fact that they don't know how to handle the problem is illegal and we can't make an exception for prostitutes," says a council spokesman.

But he stressed that the authorities are not planning to

hunt out illegal immigrants working as prostitutes. The council is, however, determined to ensure all the conditions required for "tolerance permits" are met.

SOR insists they do not want preferential treatment but a more realistic approach to the problem and time to "clean up our act".

They warn too that the council's tough stance will only succeed in forcing the illegal foreign prostitutes further into the back streets and criminal circles. What SOR would like to see is a temporary amnesty for these women allowing them to work for the industry for a year.

Turning a blind eye to the city's flourishing sex industry is a long standing tradition in Amsterdam but the huge influx of illegal foreign women on the circuit has caused concern because of links with organised crime.

Accepting the existence of the oldest profession in the world is one thing but giving brothels an official stamp of approval has been a difficult step - even for the progressive Dutch.

Juppé's attack on benefits delights the right

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The French health and social security system, one of the most generous and costly in Europe, is to undergo two years of sweeping change to end its indebtedness, streamline its functioning and reduce inequities.

The measures, presented to parliament yesterday by the prime minister, Alain Juppé, were hailed as one of the most ambitious reforms of the system in its 50 years of existence. The financial markets were delighted with the tough social security measures. Shares and government bonds soared, thanks to hopes that a tighter fiscal policy would allow interest rate cuts. The franc rose to Fr3.45 to the German mark.

The proposed reforms, which were to be the subject of a vote of confidence yesterday, affect the whole administrative structure of the health and social security system, known as the Sécurité, as well as the way the system works. No one in France will be untouched.

Some of the most immediate effects will be in the provision of health care, the sector running up the highest debts. As from next year, a ceiling is to be set on spending by hospitals and doctors, and the 19 different national health insurance schemes are to be streamlined. The homeless and jobless, who have risked falling out of the system, will receive automatic cover. But in a clear concession to the right, only foreigners legally resident in France will qualify.

A patient's right to choose from an almost infinite range of GPs will be limited; another outcome could be a reduction in the incomes of the highest-earning doctors. Of more than 60 MPs who took part in the debate which preceded Mr Juppé's statement this week, more than 30 were from the medical profession. But it was noted that they were unusually reticent on the question of earnings.

The most universal of Mr Juppé's measures is a new tax, introduced for 13 years at a rate of 0.5 per cent on an individual's total income, which is earmarked for paying off the Sécurité debt. The debt, estimated at 230bn francs (£30bn) - a sum contested by Mr Juppé's opponents - has been run up since 1991. From 1997 the Sécurité is expected to pay for itself, but the structure will be overhauled.

The present autonomy of the Sécurité, funded mostly by workers' and employers' contributions, and managed by a council made up of doctors, trade unions and employers, is to be ended. In future the system will be overseen by a national council answerable to parliament, which will set the budget. Among the losers from yesterday's proposals are public employees, people over 65 who need care to stay in their own homes and families, who will see their family benefits frozen through 1996.

Any reform of the Sécurité was bound to be controversial, and fierce debates have raged inside and outside parliament, ever since Mr Juppé announced his intention of taking drastic action to bring the system back into financial balance.

In proposing a greater role for parliament, however - and in his bravura performance at the French equivalent of the dispatch box, where he turned in his best rhetorical performance since the Chirac election campaign - Mr Juppé successfully defused many of the objections the legislature had threatened. The main battle now will be with the trade unions and the public sector. That might have to be fought on the streets.

US pushes for a Pacific defence union

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War and terror make 27 million homeless

MICHAEL SHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

A record total of 27 million people around the world have fled their homes because of war and persecution, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said yesterday as she called for new political thinking to prevent conflicts and to deal with the changing character of war and displacement, as some states disintegrate and others pursue policies of ethnic chauvinism.

"We live in a sophisticated world but we are responding in a patchy and short-sighted way," said Mrs Ogata, introducing a report by the UNHCR. Among the facts and figures collected last year were:

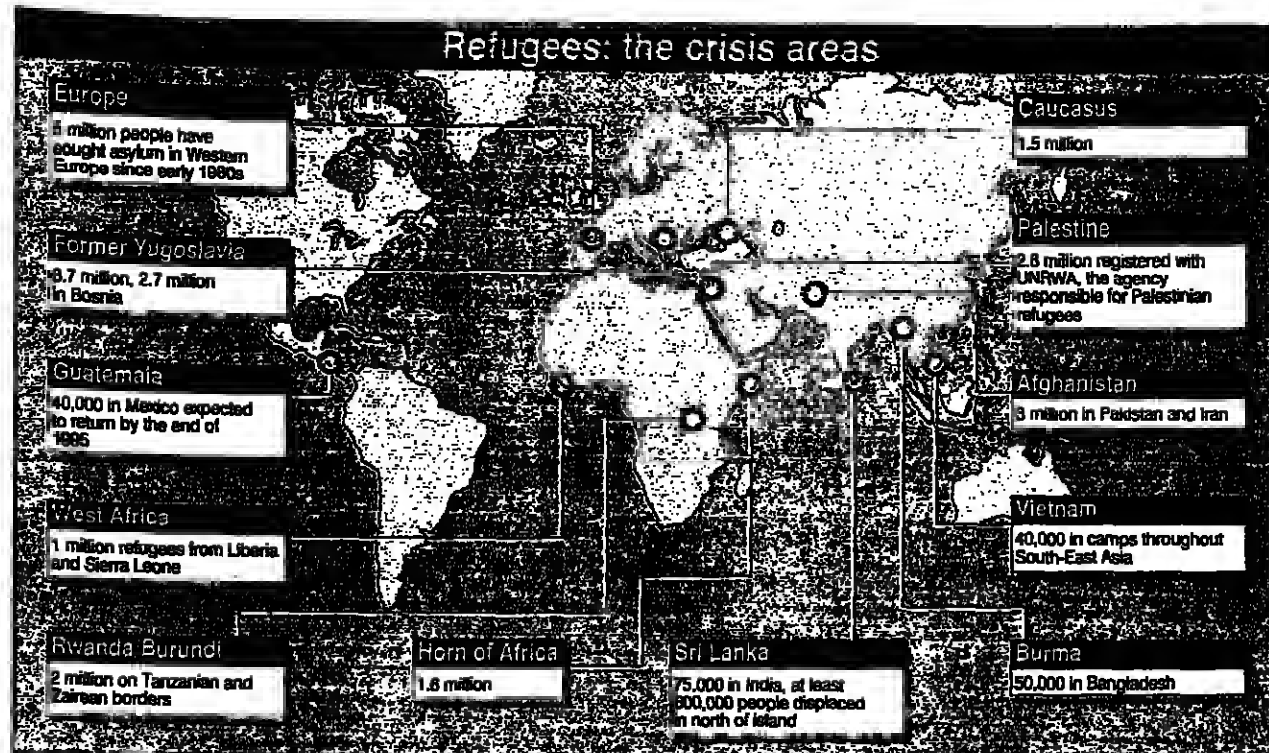
Four countries — Germany, Pakistan, Iran and Zaire — are each hosting more than 1 million refugees and 28 nations are coping with more than 100,000 people.

The three countries with the most refugees are Afghanistan, Rwanda and Liberia, with 2.74 million Afghans still living as refugees 16 years after the Soviet Union invaded, and 226 million Rwandans in exile.

Germany has taken in the greatest number (700,000) from the former Yugoslavia granted "temporary protection" in other European countries, while only a fraction are in Britain.

World-wide, there are more refugees in Africa, 6.75 million, than in any other continent.

The UNHCR's most important message is not one of figures but trends. The refugee agency, with a \$1.3bn budget, has had to alter definitions of those in need as it copes with the end of the Cold War.



ures but trends. The refugee agency, with a \$1.3bn budget, has had to alter definitions of those in need as it copes with the end of the Cold War.

Traditionally, a refugee was somebody who crossed an international border and sought asylum in another state, such as Palestinians who fled to Jordan and Lebanon in 1948. But civil conflicts and the breakup of such states as Somalia and Yugoslavia has created a new category of victim, christened

named "internally displaced persons", people trapped within their own borders but in need.

The repercussions of such catastrophes challenge the vintage Cold War doctrine that the outside world cannot intervene in the affairs of nation states. The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has admitted that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed". The breakdown

was recognised when the UN Security Council passed Resolution 688 in 1991, demanding that Iraq allow "immediate access" by international humanitarian organisations. But the members of the UN have not faced up to the difficult political consequences of this action.

Mrs Ogata cited the mass murders and ethnic conflict in Rwanda as a textbook case of the need for prevention.

What might have happened if the estimated \$2bn spent on refugee relief during the first two weeks of the emergency had been devoted to keeping the peace, protecting human rights and promoting development in the period which preceded the exodus? the report asked. The UNHCR wants to see fewer expensive "quick fix" solutions and a greater long-term commitment to preventive diplomacy.

There is growing resistance in many Third World countries to

any notion that the industrialised nations can determine a "right to intervene" based on principles which may not be universally agreed. "The Western concept of human rights continues to be strongly challenged by both the Islamic states and many countries in east Asia, where primary emphasis is placed on social order, political stability and economic growth," the report noted.

One reason for political inaction is that several refugee crises are the results of policies followed by the rival blocs in the Cold War. "The world's more powerful states were able to take advantage of refugee movements by arming and training some of the people concerned and using them to destabilise the government within their homeland," the UNHCR said, pointing to Afghanistan, Angola and central America.

Then there are countries like Somalia, where the absence of superpower equilibrium created a vacuum swiftly filled by tribal or ethnic violence. In Yugoslavia, the UNHCR's most testing assignment, three million people have been displaced by ethnic cleansing and war.

Similar forces are at work in the former Soviet Union, particularly the Caucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, where the disappearance of the Communist state apparatus and the concomitant struggle for power and territory has uprooted more than two million people," the report said.



All gone: A young Hutu in Kibeho camp weeping as water and food are cut off. Photograph: David Guttenfelder

US pushes for a Pacific defence union

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Osaka

Leaders of the main Pacific Rim economies began meeting here today, a day after William Perry, the US Defense Secretary, suggested that the divided membership of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) forum consider forming a security alliance.

"It is possible to expand Apec into an organisation that can take up security problems," he said. "This could act as a foundation for building mutual confidence in Asia." The suggestion provided an unexpected beginning to the gathering. The third full summit of Apec was always going to be lively. At the weekend, South Korea threatened to cancel President Kim Young Sam's summit with the Japanese Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama, after one of Mr Murayama's ministers made off-the-record remarks justifying the occupation of Korea.

The next day, in Seoul, China's President, Jiang Zemin, and Mr Kim denounced Japanese wartime cruelty. To add to Tokyo's problems, President Bill Clinton nearly cancelled due to the US budget crisis.

In the end, the Japanese minister resigned and Mr Clinton arranged to arrive in Osaka a day late and leave early. The show will go on: what will achieve is another question.

Apec was inaugurated in 1989 and annual meetings of ministers and heads of government culminated last year in the ambitious Bogor Declaration, which set out the aim of free trade in the Asia-Pacific area by 2010, or by 2020 for developing economies.

The Pacific Rim is the world's most powerful trading region. Apec's 18 members conduct 40 per cent of world trade; a report yesterday predicted that their collective economies could

grow by 20 per cent by the end of the century. But their economic policies are not co-ordinated. The Association of South-East Asian Nations groups seven economies; Japan and the United States have long-standing trade relationships. But there is nothing to compare with the European Union or the North American Free Trade Area.

Cynics say the Apec nations are too diverse. In Europe, there is anxiety about the difference between Germany and Portugal. In Apec, it is intended that the free trade will eventually flourish between the US and Papua New Guinea.

There are also diplomatic and military tensions: the resentment of Japan by its former Asian conquests; the trade disputes between Japan and the US; and the expansionist fears inspired by China. The Apec absurdity is epitomised by the presence in Osaka this week of Taiwan. To avoid upsetting China, it is referred to in official literature as "Chinese Taipei".

Diplomatic differences, however, have focused on another dispute, mundane, but more central to Apec's economic raison d'être. The aim of the 1995 meeting is the formulation of an "Action Agenda", to which member-states will contribute concessions and proposals in Manila next year. Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan want an exemption in the case of agriculture. The big food exporters, the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, insist that to agree tariffs on everything but rice undermines the principles of the organisation.

The rift is an embarrassment for Japan, which wants a clear outcome to its first summit as Apec host. A compromise on rice tariffs will be the main task of the next four days. Even if it is reached, Mr Perry's talk of "mutual confidence" will remain a long-term vision.

OJ's lawyer beats his rival again

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

He beat her in court and now Johnnie Cochran has beaten Marcia Clark in the book deal sweepstakes. The fast-talking attorney who secured the acquittal of OJ Simpson has won a book contract for "slightly" more than the \$2m (£2.8m) advance obtained by Ms Clark, the lead prosecution lawyer.

"Let's just say we won again," the *Los Angeles Times* quoted a friend of Mr Cochran's remarking about the contract for his memoirs, to be published in 1997 and reportedly titled *My Journey to Justice: The Autobiography of Johnnie Cochran Jr.*

The book will be published by Ballantine's *Oz* World, a specialist in books about black Americans. "I want to remind people that the battle for justice

is never ending and that one person can make a difference," the newspaper was told by Mr Cochran, who will be in Britain this weekend to address a conference of black lawyers.

The deal lifts the literary laurels from the trial to even more stratospheric levels. The Clark and Cochran deals are among the biggest advances ever paid for non-fiction, apart from General Colin Powell's \$6.5m and General Norman Schwarzkopf's \$5m. Robert Shapiro and Christopher Darden, defence and prosecution attorneys also in the Simpson case have each received \$1.5m advances for books of their own.

The only person not to benefit thus far is Mr Simpson. His reported post-trial pickings are a mere \$500,000, from photo rights to his homecoming party after his acquittal.

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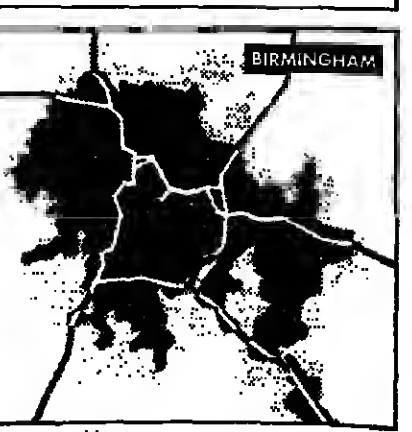
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international

Shell to go ahead with Nigerian gas plant

NICHOLAS SCHOON

Shell and the Nigerian government yesterday decided to go ahead with a huge gas project in the troubled and environmentally damaged Niger delta.

The board of the joint venture company planning the £2.5 bn liquefied natural gas plant made the decision in Lagos yesterday. Shell, which has the second largest shareholding after the Nigerian government, said it expected final contracts

to be signed with construction firms and gas purchasers by the end of the year.

There had been pressure on the company to abandon or delay the project after the executions of the Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other men from Ogoni land. Critics said approval would lend support to the military regime which hanged them. But Dick van den Broek, a Shell International director, said last night: "You have to be clear about who would be hurt.

You don't necessarily affect the present Nigerian government because the revenues will not start flowing on this project until early next century."

John Major said on Sunday that the Government would be holding urgent talks with Shell to discuss the project, the largest single investment in sub-Saharan Africa.

A meeting took place between senior Shell executives and Foreign Office officials on Monday, but both sides now say

there was no question of the Government putting any pressure on the multinational oil company to end its involvement in the gas plant.

"It's their money, and it's up to them and their European partners to explain their decisions to the public," said a Foreign Office spokesman.

Lord Melchett, chairman of Greenpeace UK, said: "We think Shell should stop oil production in Nigeria altogether. Going ahead with this plant

sends completely the wrong signal in the regime - that it's business as usual." But the director of Friends of the Earth (FoE), Charles Secrett, would not condemn the investment decision.

"We think that if Shell intends to carry on operating in Nigeria as it has in the past, then it should get out right now. It has to recognise its social and environmental obligations."

The problem for Shell's many critics is that its participation in the gas plant may reflect such

a recognition, as well as the pursuit of profits. Eventually it would cut the environmentally-damaging flaring off and wastage of Nigerian gas by 45 per cent, says Shell. It would also bring thousands of construction jobs to an impoverished region of an impoverished country.

Greenpeace and FoE are together planning a day of action in Britain against the Nigerian government and Shell at the weekend, along with other

groups including Amnesty International.

A World Bank subsidiary, the International Finance Corporation, pulled out of the project hours after the nine executions in protest. But since it was only expected to take a 2 per cent shareholding and loan \$100m, its withdrawal dealt only a minor blow.

Shell has more than 90 oil wells and hundreds of miles of pipelines in the 400 square mile Ogoni area where half a

million people live. It was accused by Mr Saro Wiwa and others of causing environmental devastation there. Apart from the noisy, polluting gas flares there have been hundreds of oil spills which have polluted farmland and waterways.

European Union foreign ministers will formally approve an arms embargo and other sanctions against Nigeria's military rulers next Monday, Reuters reports.



Statue shutdown: A German tourist views the Statue of Liberty from afar after the lay-off of federal workers forced it to close to visitors.

Photograph: AP

Time stands still during US budget deadlock

DAVID USBORNE
New York

As a large part of the United States government has sputtered to a halt this week, thanks to the continuing budget stand-off in Washington, so too has the infamous national debt clock above Times Square in Manhattan.

Installed six years ago by the late New York real estate developer, Seymour Durst, to

dramatise America's over-spending habit, the digital clock, composed of 350 high-wattage bulbs, is usually a blur of accumulating numbers as \$10,000 a second is added to the total.

Yesterday the count stayed frozen at \$4,985,567,071,200. "We shut it off, because the government has closed down," explained the late developer's son, Douglas Durst. "Theoretically, the debt has stopped growing, even though the in-

terest on the debt has not stopped."

Roughly half of the federal government's employees, about 800,000 workers, have been put on indefinite leave and it is unclear whether they will be paid for the lost days. Meanwhile, government facilities ranging from passport offices to the national parks remain closed. Even surfers of the Internet are affected: all government "home pages" have been abandoned.

How long the debt clock will stay stopped is anyone's guess. No further meetings were scheduled between the Republican leadership in Congress and President Bill Clinton to try to resolve their differences on a new budget. Newt Gingrich, leader of the House of Representatives, conceded yesterday that talks between the two sides on Monday and Tuesday had made little progress. "I don't think we're an inch closer," he

said. His Democratic counterpart, Dick Gephardt, concurred: "It looks like this is going to be a pretty long siege."

While public reaction to the crisis is overwhelmingly one of frustration with politicians in general, President Clinton seems for now to be suffering the least damage, and may even be bolstering his overall position by refusing to accede to Republican demands for a programme to balance the budget

within seven years by deep cuts in popular medical and social service programmes.

According to a *USA Today*/CNN poll, 49 per cent of Americans are blaming the Republican Congress for the impasse, with only 26 per cent putting the primary blame on Mr Clinton, who favours a less savage approach to spending cuts, and balancing the budget over 10 years.

News Analysis, page 19

IN BRIEF

Spaniard joins race for top Nato post

Brussels - Denmark fought last night to keep its former foreign minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen in the running for the top job at Nato but support was emerging for the compromise candidacy of Spain's Foreign Minister, Javier Solana.

Nato ambassadors will discuss the issue today after France, piqued at Washington's rejection of the Dutch candidate, Rijkman Groenendaal, refused to accept Mr Ellemann-Jensen. Mr Solana's name emerged after numerous defence and foreign ministers of the Western European Union praised him at a meeting in Madrid on Tuesday and the United States added its praise yesterday. Reuters

Former South Korean president held

Seoul - The former South Korean president Roh Tae-woo, in what may be his last few hours of freedom, was being interrogated late last night over his \$654m (£421m) slush funds as media reports said his arrest was imminent. Several newspapers carried headlines this morning reading "Mr Roh Arrested Today" and State television reported he would be arrested soon. Reuters

US confirms threats before Saudi bomb

Riyadh - The US embassy here received anti-Western threats before Monday's bombing that killed five Americans but did not make major security changes because Saudi Arabia was seen as "one of the safest" places in the world, the US ambassador said yesterday. The Islamic Movement for Change vowed to "extract all available means" to evict Western forces. AP

Reward increased for Tamil Tiger chief

Colombo - Police announced a fivefold increase in the reward for information leading to the capture of the commander of the rebel Tamil Tigers, Velupillai Prabhakaran. The reward is now 25m rupees (£322,000), police chief Wickremasinghe Rajaguru told reporters. AP

Walesa neck-and-neck with rival

Warsaw - President Lech Walesa and his former-Communist rival met in a crucial television debate last night with opinion polls showing they were neck-and-neck just days before Sunday's second-round presidential elections. A poll by the public CBOS institute showed that Mr Walesa was supported by 46 per cent of voters against 43 per cent for the challenger, Aleksander Kwasniewski, with 10 per cent undecided. The private Demoskop agency also put him ahead with 53 per cent in 47. Reuters

Killer put to death for \$5 murder

Potosi, Missouri - A man was executed by injection yesterday for beating his grandmother in a dispute over money and leaving her to die in her burning home in 1985. Robert Sidebottom, 33, who had been on death row since 1987, was executed at the Potosi Correctional Center after the Supreme Court turned down last-minute requests for a stay. Sidebottom confessed to beating his grandmother after she gave him \$5 - less than what he had demanded, prosecutors said. AP

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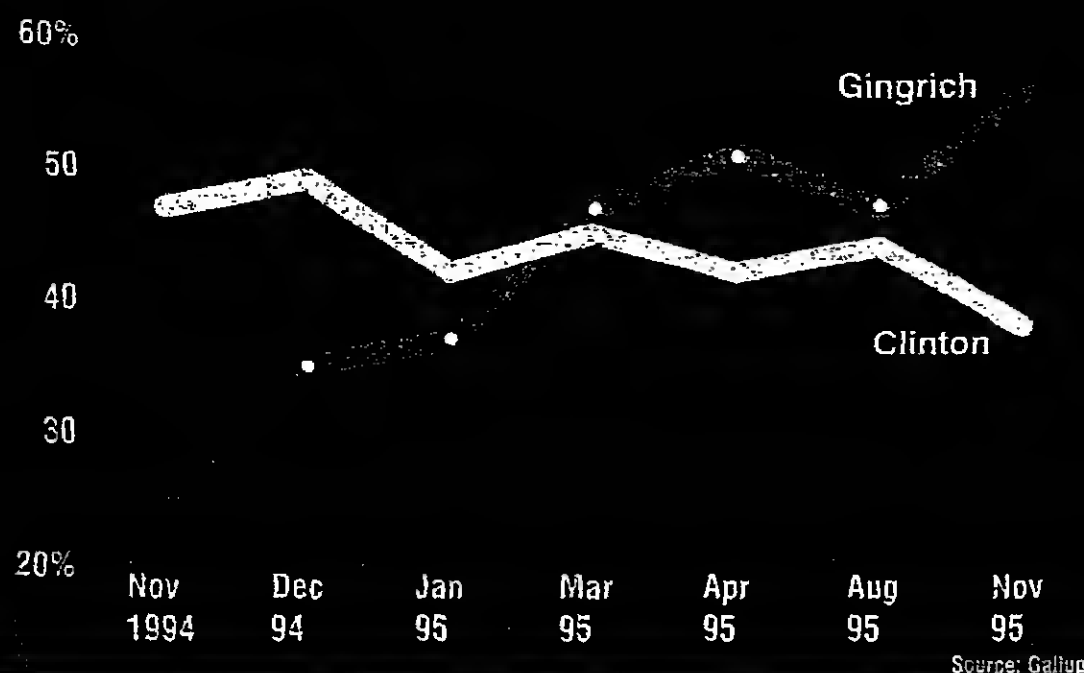
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High Noon in Washington

Disapproval rating



Rupert Cornwell describes the great showdown between warrior Newt Gingrich and healer Bill Clinton over their competing visions of America's future

★★★★★

In so many ways they are similar. Both are big men of a certain age, baby boomers with luxuriant silver thatches, just starting to run to seed. Both are southerners and products of dysfunctional families. Both are fodder for every armchair psychologist in the land. They are a quick and clever pair, who can talk the hind legs off a donkey. They adore advertising their intelligence, even if the price is a certain economy with the truth. Neither, though, is a paragon of moral rectitude, which is why neither is wholly trusted. And together they have arrived at the pinnacle of American politics – the first Democratic President in half a generation, and the Republican who is the most powerful House Speaker in recent memory.

Today, however, in the great budget war of 1995, Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich are engaged in perhaps the defining combat of their political lives.

A government shutdown is an only-in-Washington affair. Elsewhere it might be the precursor of a coup. Here it is Kalkasque rite of autumn, happening on average every

couple of years (to be precise nine times since 1981), whenever Congress and the White House fail to agree on the budget. Normally, they end after a few hours, at most a few days. But 1995 may be different. Behind the childish fingerwagging, the negotiation by insult that has most Americans yearning anew for Colin Powell and wondering what they did to deserve so malfunctioning a polity, huge and intertwined interests are at stake.

These include some of the most distinguished careers in Washington and quite possibly the presidency itself – but beyond even that, two competing visions of society. A year before he faces re-election, Clinton has established himself as defender of an old Democratic idea of America, tracing its roots to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Johnson's vision of a Great Society. Ranged against it is the "Republican Revolution" of 1994, whose walking, talking embodiment is Gingrich.

The collision has been inevitable ever since 8 November last year, when the Republicans rode a wave of disgust

with business-as-usual in Washington to capture control of Congress for the first time in 40 years. For once, an American political party had a manifesto, the Contract with America, setting out the Republicans' plans to roll back government, return powers to the states and – though no one paid much attention at the time – to balance the federal budget in seven years. And for once, in Gingrich, a political party had a man absolutely determined to push its "contract" through.

In technical terms, the present impasse is a nightmare to explain: a jungle of such abstruse notions as continuing resolutions, 13 separate appropriations bills and Section B Medicare – not to mention

contending expert budget projections stretching into the next millennium, which in fact may

offer ground for the compromise that must finally come. Peer through the forest and pick out the trees, though, and the struggle becomes clear cut, and titanic.

Behind the hickering lie two competing concepts of a government's role in society. Clinton's vetoes this week of bills that would have given the government temporary authority to borrow and spend money – and which have sent 800,000 federal workers home – were but a tiny foretaste of what is to come. Any day now we will get to the meat of the matter: the giant "reconciliation bill" which the Republicans are preparing to send to the White House, containing their plan to cut planned spending by \$1,000bn, and taxes by \$245bn, and balance the budget – all by 2002. Far more than a bill, this

is the bible of the New Republicanism. Clinton will surely veto it on the spot. In doing so, he will set out the ground on which the 1996 election will be fought.

To measure the moment, consider what is in truth a sideshow to the main event: the predicament of Bob Dole. Carriers come scarcely more distinguished than his: senator for 27 years, minority leader, majority leader, presidential candidate in 1980 and 1988, and now favourite for the Republican nomination next year. But at his obligatory appearances with Gingrich to rail budget inactivity on the White House, the majority leader's twitchy discomfort is plain to see. Left to a deal-making pragmatist such as Bob Dole, the dispute would long since have been settled.

Instead, he watches in the knowledge that his chances of victory in 1996 do not lie in his hands. He may be the Republican candidate, but Gingrich, not he, is Republicanism made flesh. And Gingrich, to put it mildly, is not loved.

A year after the 1994 election, political Washington may still be besotted by him. Not so the country at large, ever more alienated by the Gingrich that his devotees in the capital somehow overlook – the harsh voice that tears apart opponents as a pneumatic drill rips up asphalt, the lack of evident compassion for the needy of society, his doctrinaire glibness, on occasion his sheer silliness. Twelve months ago, he offered refreshing asringency and new ideas. Now, more frequently, he gets on people's nerves. No US politician has

higher disapproval ratings.

Gingrich muses of a presidential run, but if the polls are right, he would be trounced not only by Clinton but also in the Republican primaries, supposedly dominated by the very right-wing activists who hang on his every utterance. Rather, this battle over the budget is Gingrich's own presidential election.

And thus unfolds a classic contest between two political stereotypes, the warrior against the healer. To prevail, both must borrow from the persona of the other. Clinton has to show that, contrary to public perception, there are principles he will not abandon, that there is steel, not just putty, in his spine. The task of Gingrich the warrior is exactly opposite – to show that he cares about ordinary people, that he can deliver a deal as well as a soundbite.

So far at least, Clinton is winning. He has the advantage of being a single voice from the pulpit of the White House, speaking "on behalf of the American people" – a far more potent formula than the multiperson Republican choir wheeled out to respond in the

Congressional press room. Skillfully, he has defined the argument, playing upon fear and painting the Republicans in general, and Gingrich in particular, as extremist ideologues bent on destroying the Medicare and Medicaid federal health schemes for the elderly and the poor, removing the welfare safety net and doing away with basic work safety and environmental regulations – all for tax cuts that will benefit the rich. Clinton's tactics are working. By a margin of five to one, according to a poll yesterday, the public blames Congress rather than the President for the country's troubles.

But the equation may change if the deadlock continues. Until now, Clinton has got away with simply saying no. With the reconciliation bill, he will have to come up with ideas of his own, and explain how he plans to balance the budget, a goal as unassailable as motherhood. If the public starts to shift blame in his direction, today's resolve may weaken. If so, it would not be the making of a President Gingrich. But it could mean the end of President Clinton.

Diary

JOHN WALSH

Hot news, if a little late, about the journalistic profession's own King Lear, Sir David English, editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers. Last Friday he turned up in Dorset, to accept an honorary DLitt from the University of Bournemouth (which, although it's one of those phony-balmus new universities, boasts a BA degree course in the ink trade). Sir David's connections with the town are numerous: he was born there, went to school there, had his first job there... and was nicked by the police there.

As he told the thunderstruck audience, it was all because of a scam invented by his paper. To expose the laxness of security on British Rail, the Bournemouth Evening Echo sent its quaking cub reporter to the local railway station with instructions to pinch a few mailbags from the platform and return with his trophies. Unbeknown to young David, the police had coincidentally decided, that very day, to clamp down on petty theft on local transport. Lying in wait, they were delighted to see an obvious delinquent loading his van with purloined sacks, and arrested the miscreant on the spot. In court, English and the Echo were found guilty of "interfering with the Queen's Mail" and fined £10,000, a whacking sum in the mid-Fifties. With massive chutzpah, the paper headlined the story "Bournemouth man arrested for train robbery", without mentioning that it was the Echo that had sent him off to do so.

Left-Hand/Right-Hand Ignorance Dept. Sheridan Morley, the ebullient host of Radio 2's *Arts Show* and omniscient commentator on all things filmic, dramatic and showbiz, suffered an epic embarrassment this week. A month ago he was given the memoirs of Charlton Heston, *In the Arena*, to review for a Sunday newspaper, and panned it royally. Heaping scorn on the book, he



A row with Charlton



The great train robber

reminiscent about Heston's stage performance in *A Man for All Seasons* (in which "the most moving thing about his performance as Sir Thomas More was, in fact, his hairpiece"), mocked the "military efficiency" of the silver screen's Moses and concluded: "A terrible humourlessness pervades these memoirs... he has never managed to shake off the image of a portentous head prefect." So far, so damning.

Picture, then, Sheridan's discomfiture on Monday morning, on learning that Charlton Heston was booked to appear as a guest on his radio show – yep, *Ren Hur* in person, sitting right there in front of him, seething with indignation, with only a microphone between them. It was, I suspect, with some relief that Morley received a curt message from the great man's press agent: "Mr Heston found your review at best unhelpful, and will not now be appearing on your show."

The consumer magazine *Which?*, with its happy blend of shopping advice and ghastly case-histories of personal suffering, is always an amusing read, though I sometimes wonder if they make it up. Now I know different. Two friends of mine, Alison and Andrew, make a star appearance in the next issue because of a horrible experience in a restaurant.

The place was a new centre for African cuisine in Deansgate, Manchester, and, along with four friends, Alison and Andrew went there for a birthday supper. No tables appeared to be ready for them, although they were the only diners in the place. They ordered starters and mains and couscous, then sat and waited. And waited. At length the first course arrived, but by the time midnight struck, the glories of African cuisine had still not appeared, and one couple had to go home to their babysitter. When the dishes finally came, they were cold as the grave, and were sent back to be reheated. The prawns *reheated* moved from frozen to overcooked and were like cotton wool. The birthday party began to complain. Then the bill was unceremoniously slapped on the table, service and all; it even included a charge for the couple who had decamped at midnight after eating nothing. The party refused to pay the full whack, and everything suddenly went ballistic. The female proprietor yelled abuse, then ran and locked the front door. She threatened to call the police but instead could be heard ringing a private "security firm". Then, from below the kitchen, three hurly African *plongeurs* surfaced and took up threatening positions around the restaurant, with all the charm of the Gimp in *Pulp Fiction*. It was not a happy scene. Just as my friends were wondering if they were going to be mashed into a mirepoix of bone and tissue, the police arrived. The birthday girl went home in tears, a final hail of imprecations ringing in her head.

The name of the restaurant is Jowata's. It translates as "Wealth of Hospitality".

The British tradition of silly clubs is going strong. I've just heard of the Useless Information Club, whose 40 members (they include Keith Waterhouse and Godfrey Smith) met for the first time at L'Epicure last week. After dinner, each member had to rise and tell the company some completely unexciting piece of news, something that could not possibly assist them on their voyage down the information superhighway. Some items were considered too interesting to be acceptable, and were gonged off (such as Waterhouse's reminder that when *King Kong* was released in 1933, it went by the title *King Kong in every country in the world except Sweden*, where long means "king" and the film was therefore titled *Kong King*). Later, another diner informed the gathering that his mother-in-law's name was Gertrude. Unable to think of a thing to do with this datum, they declared him a worthy winner.

Ageing juveniles and character actors were out in force at London's Theatre Museum on Tuesday to launch Philip Hoare's life of Noel Coward. Among the crush in the plush were Nicholas Grace, fresh from the final Urquhart saga on television, Peter Ackroyd, the famously sober and restrained novelist and biographer, Ned Sherrin, the chording impresario, and an anonymous female psychic who confided that it was her habit to send clay voodoo dolls through the post to people who displeased her. Various Maughams, effete young diarists, wheezing luvvies and even Jane Birkin's mum (the first person to sing "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square") wandered through the museum's stately rooms and bore down on the beaming author.

Mr Hoare was beaming because his five years' devoted work had been rewarded beyond his wildest dreams. Graham Payne, Coward's devoted friend and executor, had just presented him with Coward's beautiful wristwatch, a Longines number with a strap apparently of beaten gold. Unfortunately, from where I was standing, it seemed to be 25 minutes fast....

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Waiting for the Budget

The Queen does not fit the usual profile of a political hack, whose chief aim is to score points against political opponents. Not for them crowns, bugles and regal finery. They are normally seen in crumpled suits, bleary-eyed and slightly down at heel. Yet the head of state was called upon yesterday to play low politics. She had to set out the Government's big idea: to make Labour squirm.

Her speech to Parliament described a menu for the forthcoming session which, ministers admit in private, has been chosen to give Labour indigestion. The crack-down on asylum-seekers and the benefits they receive is meant to make Labour look soft on immigration: it is called playing the race card. In a similar vein, the Government wants to shift the legal balance in favour of the prosecution by changing the rules on disclosure of evidence. It's the law and order card, aimed at showing that Labour is, after all, soft on crime. Likewise, proposals to make it easier for schools to become grant-maintained will focus attention on Labour's dilemma: the party opposes GM schools, the establishments where some members of the Shadow Cabinet like to educate their children. Highlighting Labour's ideological confusions and lingering hypocrisy has considerable merit, but these measures have little additional purpose. Britain is not overrun by refugees. Guilty defendants do not routinely run rings around prosecutors. And it is already simple for a school to opt out, provided parents approve. The Government is wasting parliamentary time in the greater cause of getting itself re-elected.

Such tactics are deeply depressing, though hardly unexpected at this stage in the parliamentary cycle. Even in the determinedly strategic days of Margaret Thatcher, the Conservatives had a doc-

trine that nothing really radical could be pushed through the Commons except in the first couple of years after an election.

The compensation is that among the 16 Bills outlined yesterday there are several sensible measures. Legislation allowing disabled people to receive state cash to choose equipment and services for themselves is a great innovation: people with chronic conditions often know better than the experts how to meet their needs. The decision to allow the Health Service Ombudsman to investigate the clinical judgement of doctors strikes a blow for public accountability, though many GPs, predictably, will have been under the spotlight.

Lord Mackay's reforms of the laws governing divorce and domestic violence are humane and deserve to survive attacks from the Tory right. And ministers have rightly recognised, in their planned broadcasting legislation, that cross-media ownership needs to be relaxed to allow British companies to diversify and face foreign competition. But in setting limits on market shares, this legislation should also ensure that would-be monopolists, in particular the Murdoch empire, do not swamp local competition.

In these practical measures, there is no sign of a big innovative idea that the Conservatives will need if they are to recover from their deep unpopularity in time for the general election. There was little or nothing that addresses Britain's most pressing concerns: job insecurity, unemployment and the absence of an economic left-to-right, the forthcoming Bill that was not mentioned yesterday – the Finance Bill – which the Chancellor will unveil in his Budget on 28 November. On that, yesterday's announcements, this Government's electoral future now hangs.

Can Di save the monarchy?

If the Queen thinks it's tough playing Luppert for the Government, life is about to get even less amusing. For Diana's debut on *Panorama* next Monday has the nation gripped with anticipation. Will she titillate us with lurid details of rows in the royal bedchamber?

Whatever she says, it bodes ill for the Queen's conception of the monarchy. But that is probably no bad thing. The Princess could be the catalyst for some necessary and positive changes.

Let's face it, the present monarchy sits uneasily with our modern society. A country that aspires to be meritocratic and classless retains as its figurehead a family that stands at the apex of the class system. The Queen is the symbolic representation of our nation. Yet many no longer wish to be symbolised by a detached, privileged and superior hereditary elite.

The monarchy could have adapted quickly to cope with all these problems. The Scandinavian and Benelux monarchies did exactly that. Humbler, calmer, closer to the lives of the people of their country, they ride bicycles through the streets and have paid tax for years.

Instead, the Royal Family tried to preserve its position of pomp and detached privilege by repackaging itself as a fairytale. But just as the Windsors' aristocratic lifestyle runs counter to every trend in modern society, so their fairy-tale image is incompatible with the reality of modern relationships. By resisting gradual

change they have been left behind by the world, and a crisis of the monarchy has been the inevitable consequence. And their resort to television has ensured that it is played out in the full glare of publicity.

The Princess has been cast in the most interesting role in this historical drama. She is the catalyst either for renewal or destruction, depending on how the rest of the royals respond. For she has built a huge public following by breaking the traditional royal mode. By cuddling her children, riding the rapids at a children's theme park, jogging, driving her own car and listening to pop music, she has carved out a distinctive image for herself. She is not an inspiring, exciting or regal figure, nor is she a role model for today's youth. But she is modern and sympathetic.

What we are witnessing is a public relations battle between the Royal Family of the past and the mother of the future monarch. It is a battle that, if it might seem, the Princess's challenge might just push and cajole the Royal Family into modernising itself rather more than it has so far been prepared to accept. If she goes too far in pursuit of revenge against her husband, she could drag the whole institution down into an orgy of muck-raking recriminations. If she gets it right, then the Prince of Wales could be forced to respond.

The royals have resisted change for too long. Undignified as these royal rows certainly are, they could conceivably help to create a monarchy fit for the 21st century.

ANOTHER VIEW Vanessa Feltz

Let's hear it from Herself

Apox on the pusillanimous pundits who would ban the Princess of Wales from the box. What would they have her do – compose a retaliatory haiku? Let's face it, a more televisive creature never bestrode a multi-gym. The woman is a navy-blue-blooded Anthea Turner. Lunge a Pentax at her bottle-blond highlights and she's ready. Public crisis-crossing of the scarcely-versed royal thighs has become a performance art.

This princess was positively born to broadcast. What is more, she has tried turning the other sullen cheek and stiffening her (subtly glossed) upper lip, and where has it dumped her? Up to her swan neck in the seething effluent of malevolent speculation, rising hackles and sordid surmise. Life as a fallen idol is not all lightly tossed radicchio at Le Caprice, you know. When every Tom, Dick, James and ex-rock-moll PR chick is entitled to spill bones, vent spleens and dish dirt, somehow dignified silence lacks bite. No one loves an enigma. Post-Andrew Morton passivity starts to look frighteningly like an admission of guilt. Eventually, a girl's gotta do what every slighted woman from Mandy Smith to Germaine Greer has done before her – sit on a sofa in a truly fetching little suit and unburden her soul in the nation's living rooms.

Anyone who thinks Diana will stiek her Maud Frizon-shod foot in it cannot have been paying much attention to the venomous character-smashing that the poor dear has already endured. When Corn-

flakes' eaters globally are already convinced you are a ruthless, home-wrecking, telephone-abusing hulk with megalomaniacal exhibitionist tendencies, there is not a whole lot of cred to shed.

What is more, she has the comfort of knowing she cannot possibly make more of a ham-fisted hash of it than the Prince of Wales. Dimbleby and Charles were the Cannon and Ball of documentaries, as spontaneous as autocue, as wooden as Charles's heart. Diana, reading a pre-written speech, is unadorned woe-mangling torment, but, one to one off-the-cuff, the lady is a star. Of course, the best television gives the illusion of being precisely that, one individual speaking intimately to another. If the *Panorama* producer soothes her shyness, slices through the red tape and pulls it off, we should hear the 20th-century's happiest lion unscripted for the first time.

It is appropriate that we bask in Diana's own version of the conjugal scraps which have kept so-called "royal correspondents" in Armani, if only to oust the humbugs and parasites. Diana has performed sterling service salvaging flagging dinner-party conversation for well over a decade. Surely she has earned the right to look us squarely in the lens and distinguish the titile from the tattle? The Princess's only mistake is choosing such a frothy, trivial, lightweight programme for soul-baring. She would fare far better on *Vanessa*.

The writer hosts a chat show on ITV



The ratings war

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Problems of legal Ecstasy

From Mr Charles de Lacy

Sir: You propose (leading article: "The agony of Ecstasy", 14 November) that Ecstasy should be brought within the law but you give no consideration to the complex problems this would create.

For example, all legitimate drugs have to have a proven track record in terms of their safety before they are licensed. To bring Ecstasy within the law, would you imagine it being submitted to all the rigorous tests of any other pharmaceutical drug?

Or is your proposal that any illegally used substances that are widely used will be deemed to be safe and legitimate for recreational purposes, but not medical purposes?

If the latter route were taken, it would have a detrimental knock-on effect on the overall safety of medicines. It would lead to a culture and an outlook that no longer had the rigorous standards we expect from our pharmaceutical industry.

If we are to follow your proposal of legalisation on abused drugs, this must be within the current parameters of testing and licensing. This would mean some recreational drugs never being licensed, because they are dangerous. Others could be licensed but only available on prescription.

I suggest that this scenario is impracticable, and we should accept that there will always be an illegal drugs industry, albeit decriminalised, and with the consequential result that from time to time people will die.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES DE LACY
Chelmsford,
Essex
15 November

From Dr Richard Pullinger

Sir: Your suggestion that "Ecstasy" should be brought within the law" (14 November) is based on an incorrect assumption. By focussing on the possible adverse effects of contaminants you have missed the crucial point that adulterated Ecstasy is not safe. Readers of the national and medical press will be aware of the many cases where death has been attributed to Ecstasy itself.

Bringing Ecstasy within the law would be misguided and indefensible.
Yours faithfully,
RICHARD PULLINGER
Reading
14 November

New mums – what you need is broth

From Mrs Christine Smith

Sir: Perhaps pregnant women living on benefit need educating ("Mothers' poor eating puts babies at risk", 14 November). How about making soup: a marrow bone (a few pence from the butcher), root vegetables, perhaps a tin of tomatoes and some lentils, and bread for the children to dunk. Very nutritious, warming and inexpensive. A teaspoon of yeast extract stirred in would add nutrition and flavour.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE SMITH
London, E1
14 November

Nigerian lessons for Shell and for the world

From Mr Menzies Campbell, MP

Sir: The law is quite clear. The directors of a limited company must manage its affairs in the best interests of its shareholders. They must put ethical considerations aside.

The directors of Shell would do well to keep those principles firmly in mind when they contemplate further investment in Nigeria. How can it possibly be in the interests of their shareholders to invest further in a country where civil war could break out at any time, whose leaders are unaccountable to reason, and which could easily become the subject of economic sanctions?

A prudent director of a public company would want to put his shareholders' money where there was much less risk than in Nigeria. The directors of Shell need not wrestle with their consciences. All they need to do is to fulfil their legal duty.

Yours etc,
MENZIES CAMPBELL
MP for Fife North East
(Lib Dem)
House of Commons
London, SW1
The writer is the Liberal Democrat spokesman on foreign affairs and defence.

From Mr David Bull

Sir: Your article "Shell defies calls to pull out of oil operations" (13 November) states that Amnesty International is one of

several organisations "united in the belief that there should be international oil sanctions against Nigeria. In fact Amnesty International never calls for sanctions but instead uses a wide range of campaigning techniques including the application of intense world-wide pressure on governments flouting international human rights standards.

The Nigerian government's blatant defiance of international appeals to spare the lives of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight other human rights activists is a senseless, outrageous act. It is now vital that political and diplomatic pressure on the Nigerian authorities to urgently tackle their human rights crisis be maintained and increased. We could not save Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-defendants, but we must not give up on those others who still depend on international pressure on Nigeria to save their lives.

Sincerely,
DAVID BULL
Director
Amnesty International UK
London, EC1
14 November

From Mr Bill Morris

Sir: Dick van den Broek, Shell's regional co-ordinator for Africa, argues (Another View, 13 November) against a boycott of the brutal Nigerian regime for reasons of self-interest dressed

up as concern for the Nigerian people. However, Shell must accept some of the blame for the tragic abuse of human rights in Nigeria, culminating in the judicial murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues.

The Eliche and Ogoni people have protested against Shell for its exploitation and pollution of their land for vast profits, which have not been shared with the people of the Niger river delta. Shell's response to the people's protestations was typical – no negotiation. Shell would rather call in the police than negotiate. The Nigerian military government must be punished by the global community. But is Shell to be allowed to extricate itself from this situation without any blame?

Governments must recognise that transnational companies, particularly oil companies such as Shell, have to operate within a framework of controls so that governments can protect their people from the worst excesses of the blind pursuit of profit. Mr Van den Broek's special pleading notwithstanding, the Nigerian tragedy is a lesson to all countries – not just developing ones, but those in the developed world as well.

Yours sincerely,
BILL MORRIS
General Secretary
T&G
London, SW1
14 November

Potential power of wind farms

From Mr C. B. Moynihan

Sir: I would just like to point out that although Nicholas Schoon is correct in his statement that wind farms currently generate around one-thousandth of Britain's electricity production ("Vote of confidence in future of rubbish-to-power brokers", 3 November), his tone is somewhat misleading.

This statistic is a reflection of the comparative youth of the industry rather than its future potential, and fails to take into account the rapid pace of technological advancement since the introduction of the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation (NFFO) in 1989, for which I was ministerially responsible in the early Nineties.

The power output of the average wind turbine is set to double in the next few years. An average wind farm of 25 machines now might produce enough to satisfy the power needs of 5,000 houses. However, wind farms of the future could be able

to produce twice that amount of electricity using the same number of turbines. The suggestion that we could get 10 per cent of our electricity from the wind by 2010 is no longer a figure plucked out of the air, but is a genuinely achievable goal.

The great success of the wind industry in rising to the challenge set by NFFO is demonstrated by the 50 per cent fall in prices over the last five years.

These achievements have taken a significant step towards realising the original objectives behind the establishment of NFFO: namely, the contribution towards pollution reduction and diversity, security and sustainability of energy supplies within an economically attractive and environmentally acceptable context.

Yours faithfully,
C. B. MOYNIHAN
CMA Consultants
London, SE1
10 November
The writer was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy, 1990-92.

Sex, survival and construction firms

From Ms Sandi Rhys Jones

Sir: The balance between arguing the moral case and the economic case for equal opportunities depends very much on the nature of the business being addressed (Letters, 9 November). The recent government/industry review of the construction industry carried out by Sir Michael Latham calls for a reduction in real costs of 30 per cent and an increase in the number of women. A tall order for a male-dominated industry battered by recession.

The moral imperative is hardly foremost in the minds of those companies struggling to survive – and there is legislation in place to deal with that issue. Therefore the working group set up in response to the Latham Review to improve equal opportunities in the industry has focused on the business case, because it is the most persuasive and constructive argument for change.

To survive, the construction industry must change to attract and retain the best people for the job. The benefits will be for men, women, the industry and the clients it serves.

Our initiatives are gender-led, not gender specific. Yours sincerely,
SANDI RHYNS JONES
Chairwoman
Construction Industry Board
London, WC1
14 November

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Back issues of the Independent are available from Historic Newspapers, 0800 906609.

Fine-tuning the lottery

From Mr Denis Vaughan

Sir: There can be no doubt the National Lottery has delivered Britain a capacity for greater funding of sport, charities and the arts than previously possible. But the success of the National Lottery is not limited to its achievements to date; a greater potential for funding of the arts, sports and charities is yet to be realised.

When I argued for a lottery, back in 1989, few believed it could happen, and fewer could see the limitless possibilities of using the lottery as a vehicle to increase participation and enthusiasm in sport and the arts.

Today, the success of the lottery speaks for itself, but we cannot be complacent with the achievement to date. The future of the National Lottery depends on ensuring we work to maximise the funds available to the good causes and that the original purpose of the lottery – to increase the quality of life for us all – is not forgotten.

We must focus our attention on fine-tuning the success of the National Lottery. Our aims are simple: the abolition of the 12 per cent tax on the lottery, redrafting the lottery licence in the form of a service contract and adjusting the distribution process to ensure that 80 per cent of all good-cause funds go to the National Lottery Charities Board, leaving the minimum five per cent required by law to each of the other four beneficiaries.

Despite its success we should not be content with the present state of the National Lottery. There are still many jackpots to be realised.
Yours sincerely,
DENIS VAUGHAN
Executive Director
The Lottery Promotion Company
London, WC2

Straight men and macho culture

From Mr Peter Tatchell

Sir: The Commission on Children and Violence is right to point out the links between "macho male attitudes" and aggressive, anti-social behaviour (report, 9 November). However, to understand fully violent criminality, we need also to recognise that it is a form of behaviour associated overwhelmingly with young male heterosexuals (and very rarely with gay men). In straight male culture, aggression is deemed cool for "real men". Many act tough because they fear being accused of sissiness and queerness. Belligerence is seen as a way of asserting their masculinity and their heterosexuality.

So long as male sensitivity and tenderness is looked down upon as unmanly and queer, large numbers of straight men (especially those who are insecure about their sexual orientation) will continue to project a bellicose machismo to "prove" their manhood and avoid the "taint" of homosexuality. Reducing male violence is thus partly bound up with eradicating homophobia. When heterosexual men no longer despise gentleness or fear queers, fewer will feel the need to act tough to distance themselves from the homosexual "other".
Yours sincerely,
PETER TACHELL
London, SE1

John Major

What re



JOHN MAJOR

The writer is the Liberal Democrat spokesman on foreign affairs and defence.

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John Major, Leader of the Opposition

One solution for the Tories after yesterday's timid tinkering is to stop pretending they are in power

The Queen's Speech brought its customary bulletin on the health of our parliamentary culture. "What a pathetic bunch... a tawdry, low-life, demeaning exercise in political tactics," said the Leader of the Opposition. "Childish, juvenile nonsense... total baloney," replied the Prime Minister. On the other hand, to be positive, no Members actually dropped their trousers and waggled their bottoms at the other side - but then, I couldn't see the whole chamber clearly.

High politics it wasn't, neither in the debate nor in the ideas being debated. The most interesting thought of the day came from Tony Blair when he suggested that the asylum and immigration measures be put before a standing committee of the Commons, taking evidence about the bogus asylum-seeker problem, so that consensus could be achieved and race be kept out of politics.

That would scupper any attempt to use this issue to divide the parties - as a Tory strategist had chillingly suggested a few weeks ago. On the other hand, it would prevent Labour from continuing to question the Conservatives' bona fides, as Jack Straw and Tony Blair have been doing. This would shut both sides up.

Among those nodding his vigorous agreement when Blair suggested it was Jim Lester, the One Nation Tory and close friend of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Major had an urgent mutter conversation with Tony Newton, the Leader of the Commons, who was sitting beside him. He said he would consider the idea, but wasn't immedi-

ately attracted to it. He didn't say why not; the main reason was surely the direction it came from, and the fact it was thrown out without warning as a debating point. But it would be a good gauntlet for him to stoop and pick up. Blair would win credit; but so would Major. It would be good for the reputation of politics.

Which, of course, would mark it out from most of what is fated to happen over the next year or so, as this marathon mud-fight of an election campaign slithers on. It is not going to be a heroic period. The Queen's Speech was a mixture of blatantly second-order party political issues, chosen not for their importance to Britain but for the way they will sharpen differences between the parties, and mildly interesting administrative measures.

We should not be censorious about the party-dividing issues, the asylum Bill and the measures on grant-maintained schools and the Bill on media ownership. You can't be in favour of democracy and against party politics. Not yet, anyway. But these measures may seem a little too blatantly party-inspired to do the Tories much good in the country.

As Douglas Hurd elegantly suggested in the context of divorce reform, "in this climate, political success goes to those who sound least like politicians". The wisest saying of the day, that should be carved in tropical hardwood and hung across the door of the Commons chamber.

The media Bill should be seen partly as a party matter simply because anything that touches the ownership



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

of newspapers and broadcasting companies is now so intensely sensitive. It is the place where private power and political power are currently clashing. The new measure would have two politically interesting effects. It raises just enough of a question-mark over the longer-term future of Rupert Murdoch's newspaper holdings to suggest that he shows a hint of loyalty in the run-up to the election.

It would also open the way for Associated Newspapers, owner of the *Daily Mail*, to pounce on Yorkshire Television or Tyne-Tees, or both. Immediately after mentioning the measure yesterday Mr Major stated that "we, as a party, have a long tradition of helping those in need". He may have meant the measures on homelessness he went on to discuss; but for a split second, one had the surreal impression that he was talking about Lord Rothermere.

Well, as I say, we mustn't be censorious. Everything bar race is fair game in politics. And there is also the usual raft of measures that come under the broad heading of administrative reform - changes to the way

disabled people get funding, training measures, housing, an extension of the powers of the under-employed security service to become involved in the drugs war, changes to court procedures and so on.

These raise bitter passions among special interest groups and the closed order of political obsessives, but none is likely to raise a weary eyebrow in Kenneth Clarke's fabled saloon bar, the Dog and Duck. For that we must await his Budget, when the income-tax cuts long predicted by this newspaper may set the national debate alive in a way the Queen's Speech hasn't.

In the good times, sensible administrative reforms and the odd bold stroke, which suggests a longer-term programme of change are enough to get governments re-elected. But these are not good times, or at least, not good enough times.

Had the economy been growing really strongly and the housing market moving, then the significance of, for instance, the education reforms would have seemed more substantial. Part of the trick of democratic politics is to give a sense of forward movement. When a government seems young and virile that can be done with relative modest legislation, like the early Thatcher trade union reforms, because we assume that the measures will accumulate; we judge the political intention as well as the immediate legal wording.

The core of this government's dilemma, as exposed yesterday, is that it seems old. It cannot convey forward energy or a sense of its own future. So these measures, administrative or

political, fail to fit into a wider pattern of reform. They don't lead anywhere. What is supposed to follow nursery vouchers, or the asylum measures, or the Broadcasting Bill?

There is no grand project for the Conservatives, nothing to make our nape-hairs prickle, or at least nothing that is plausibly deliverable by this party now. They can talk about a low-tax, stricken state but they have little idea of how they would get there. There are other right-wing projects on offer, such as withdrawal from the European Union or the dismantling of the free National Health Service, but they are not practical politics.

The Conservatives are in serious danger of having the worst of both worlds, being attacked by Labour for their right-wing rhetoric - Blair is labelling them "extremists" in just the same way as President Clinton is going for the Republican leaders in Congress - while failing to deliver populist measures. In private many senior ministers seem frustrated and boxed-in - and not surprisingly.

Their last way out is to convince the country that the only grand project that is on offer, the Labour-Liberal programme for political change in Scotland and at Westminster, is horribly dangerous - that life under a ministry of administrative tinkers may be dispiriting, but that it's better than rule by reformers. That would mean the Conservatives ceasing to think of themselves as a government and becoming, in effect, an opposition in office. On the strength of yesterday's programme, that may well be the plan.

Revealed: Diana the philosopher

On Monday, the Princess of Wales is due to appear on *Panorama* and talk about everything. Well, there is one thing she will not be talking about. She will not be talking about the *Panorama* interview. That is because she has already talked to us about that. Here is the interview I was gracious enough to accept from her recently.

Now, your Highness (if I may call you that), there is a sense in which the fact of this interview is more important than anything in the interview itself, is it not?

I am afraid you will have to explain that to me. You see, I am just a silly empty-headed Sloane deep down, and I don't understand abstract concepts.

Is that really true?

It's what everyone believes, which comes to the same thing. I've been told it so often I almost believe it myself. Was it not Hegel who said perceived truth and objective truth sometimes change places in the night?

I've no idea, Hegel?

You have heard of Hegel?

Strenth, this interview is going to be harder work than I realised.

Do you want to start again?

Cut? Go for another take?

You seem to know the jargon.

Look, I went into training for my *Panorama* interview four weeks before it happened. And I don't mean physical training. Everyone knows I work out at the gym to keep in physical trim. It doesn't seem to occur to them I might do the same intellectually. Seems unlikely?

But every time I do an interview I go into intellectual training.

But you have never done an interview like this before.

I have never trained like this before. What was the question?

I think I said, there is a sense in which the fact of this interview is more important than anything in the interview itself, is it not?

Was it not Oscar Wilde who said the value of the telephone was merely the value of what two people have to say to each other? Lord knows what he would have thought of the Internet.

Are you sure you are Diana?

Have I come to the right palace?

To answer your question, yes, the fact of the interview is more important than anything I might say in it. Do you remember the interview between Prince Charles and Jonathan Dimbleby which started all this off?

I remember Dimbleby and the prince sitting with an empty seat between them as if waiting for the opposition spokesman to turn up. I distinctly remember one of them saying they had committed adultery with Camilla Parker Bowles. I can't remember much more.

My feelings exactly. People remembered much more about the interview as an event than as an exchange or expression of ideas. I learnt from that. I learnt this could be stage-man-

aged as an event before it even happened. Hence the fuss with the palace, and the prince's birthday, and the secrecy of the recording. The most important thing about this interview is the fact that I reserved the right to tell the palace.

But surely, if you told the palace you were going to do an interview on the BBC next week, they would fear the worst?

That was the whole idea. They do fear the worst. You saw all the headlines: "Palace fury".

"Prince goes bananas on birthday"; "Queen hits the ceiling".

None of this is because of what I have said. They don't know what I have said. It is only because I have said it and I didn't forewarn them. Do you think Charles asked my permission to talk to Dimbleby?

I would guess not.

I should coco. So, do you know what the most important thing about the interview is?

Er - no.

The most important thing



MILES KINGTON

Economists want to take quality as seriously as quantity. But measuring it is not always so simple

What really makes us happy?

Can you put a price on tranquillity? Or, more controversially, do people really want it?

The Government is trying to measure the environmental damage of major road schemes to what extent people living near a road suffer as a result of additional noise, dirt and other pollution. Obviously, town bypasses, which reduce urban traffic, will tend to have the opposite effect. This is something of a first. The cost/benefit studies done before all big transport schemes do not seek to put a specific price on calm. Officialdom measures the time saved by people using new roads or railways, but not less about the people who do not use them, yet are nevertheless affected.



HAMISH McRAE

It is an important breakthrough, for economists have been tardy at measuring quality as opposed to quantity. The normal measure of standard of living is gross national product per head, which ignores a host of things that affect living standards, such as pollution and crime. Indeed, crime actually increases GDP. If someone breaks into a car and steals a radio, the cost of the replacement, plus the glass, both show as an addition to GDP. In the unlikely event of the perpetrator being caught, the costs of the trial, lawyers, social workers, police, prison officers and the like - thousands of pounds - all appear as additional economic activity and so are included in GDP. No one would argue that living standards were really higher as a result of this human endeavour, but I suspect that few people instructing divorce lawyers are aware that one side-effect of their personal discomfort will be to boost the official figures for the country's standard of living.

There are a host of other examples of this sort of nonsense. The most extreme were the economic statistics produced in the former Soviet Union and its satellites, which simply looked at the quantity of output being produced. It did not matter whether the products were wanted by consumers or that they could not be sold on world markets; all that mattered was that they had been produced. When the Soviet Union collapsed, its GDP was



How do you measure happiness? Would anyone want the life of a Japanese broker when they could be dancing at the carnival in Rio de Janeiro? Photographs: Matsumoto Tsugufum/AP; Vanderlei Almeida/Reuters

shown to be perhaps half the level that the official figures had suggested.

A bit of this "productism" lingers even here in Britain. Thus we tend to measure the performance of much of the public sector in terms of quantity of input - numbers of hospital beds, size of classes - rather than in quality of output. (If medical advances enable shorter post-operative stays in hospital, a fall in the number of beds may be a sign of an improvement in medical care, rather than the reverse.)

At the moment, the Department of Transport's plan has the specific aim of measuring what economists would call the externalities of a project - the costs that some activity, say the operations of a factory, impose on the rest of the community. It is a long-established principle that such offloading of costs should be taken into account, and that, for example, factories that pollute should have to "pay" for that in higher taxation. In practice it is not always possible to apply this, largely because there are no trustworthy

figures. So anything that attempts to measure accurately the value we place on such intangibles as calm is enormously helpful. You can do this in a reasonably scientific way by looking at differences in similar houses in calm and noisy locations. The market signals the value; it is not a question of some researcher making up a figure. But think where this leads. There are fringe pressure groups, such as the New Economic Foundation, which have attempted to adjust GNP figures to include quality of life, the running down of natural resources, and so on; the UN does a human development index, which adjusts GNP per head for education, health and other social variables; and there is a lot of high-quality economic work happening here at the London School of Economics on what makes people happy.

This LSE work has unearthed some wonderful nuggets of information, such as the fact that there has been little or no rise in reported happiness in Europe or the US during the past 20

years, and that happiness is U-shaped with age: children and retired people are happy, while the thirtysomethings are (relatively) miserable. But the main thrust of economics is still to measure what is easily measured rather than what really matters. So we are either deluged with useless data about things we do not need to know, or fed biased figures designed to support the views of the pressure group that has compiled them. Governments twist statistics, too, but the good news from the Department of Transport is that this initiative might be the start of a more general move to develop more figures about the things that really matter.

And what are they? I suggest there are two. The first is, what really does make us happy? The second is, in what way might that be changing over time?

On the first, we have some knowledge as a basis. There are the points from the LSE work. Other conclusions are that unemployed people are tremendously unhappy, and that a

worker's job satisfaction depends more on relative pay than absolute pay. There are studies by other organisations that compare happiness internationally. These show, for example, that Latin Americans tend to be rather happier than one might expect, given the practical financial problems many of them face in their daily lives. By contrast, the Japanese, despite their low crime levels and low unemployment, tend to be rather miserable.

This sort of work shows just how careful we should be in concocting the data. Look at that human development index constructed by the UN. The country at the top - the best country in the world in which to live - is Canada. And that is the country which

People say they want calm, but they drive around with their stereos blasting

came within a whisker of breaking up less than a month ago, and which may well break up within the next 15 years. If Canada were so wonderful, why would the Quebecois want out?

And so it is, to some extent, with tranquillity. People say they want calm, but drive around with stereos blasting through six speakers. For several millennia people have chosen to live in cities, despite all the observable unpleasantness of life there.

Given our deep hypocrisy, the best way of seeing what we really want is to look at what we do, not what we say. We say we want to keep the high street shops, yet we go to the supermarket on the outskirts. We say we value security, but some of us at least like creating a bit of chaos in our lives. Maybe what we really crave is balance, but that's not a state of affairs that can easily be expressed in a politician's sound-bite.

Is this changing over time? Human beings do not change - we have the same brains as the Romans. But I suspect that the giant demographic shifts now taking place will alter the balance of our society's aspirations. As the proportion of older people rises, older peoples' values will come to dominate more and more: calm may well come to be valued more highly than buzz.

One thing is certain, though. The more we measure the hard-to-measure, the more we will know about ourselves and our aspirations. Understanding ourselves may not make us any happier, but at least it gives us fewer excuses for being miserable.

LE CRUNCH?!



...NO THANKS.

PROTEST YOUR DISGUST AGAINST FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

BOYCOTT
BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU DAY

Generation Why

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



15
18

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING				DOLLAR				D-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Country	Spot
US	15579	15-11	35-02	1000				10781	
Canada	2121	5-9	21-48	1000	25-9	42-82		10830	
France	2547	52-45	105-00	14024	21-19	53-00		10447	
Italy	2657	45-02	100-70	10435	8-17	30-45		10457	
Japan	3240			10313	8-17	18-94		10420	
ECU	121	1-15	20-33	10313	20-49	103-10		10244	
Belgium	4394	15-18	37-27	13002	3-5	10-12		10567	
Denmark	9470	105-31	220-94	20820	45-38	110-10		10457	
Switzerland	24483	100-89	270-920	10313	20-51	50-15		10630	
Ireland	8709	9-7	22-20	10507	0-3	0-5		10444	
Norway	10343	100-88	251-251	10300	20-25	125-75		10429	
Sweden	10343	100-88	251-251	10300	20-25	125-75		10429	
Spain	3094	45-05	105-73	10313	10-17	18-94		10420	
Switzerland	24483	100-89	270-920	10313	20-51	50-15		10630	
Australia	1762	21-25	54-15	10313	20-51	50-15		10630	
Hong Kong	9248	1-15	20-33	10313	20-51	50-15		10630	
Malaysia	33454	0-0	0-0	10313	20-51	50-15		10630	
Singapore	2885	0-0	0-0	10313	20-51	50-15		10630	

Source: Reuters, 1991. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling.

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15562	0.0988	Nigeria	13259	80.000
Australia	15579	0.0988	Pakistan	33.329	342.59
Canada	2121	0.0988	Philippines	10.000	36.300
France	2547	0.0988	Portugal	10.000	147.00
Germany	10343	0.0988	Qatar	4.6822	1.8421
Italy	2657	0.0988	Romania	10.000	45.000
Japan	3240	0.0988	Saudi Arabia	10.000	27.840
South Korea	10343	0.0988	Taiwan	40.000	27.840
Spain	3094	0.0988	Thailand	5.7537	36.728

Source: Reuters, 1991. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling.

Tourist Rates

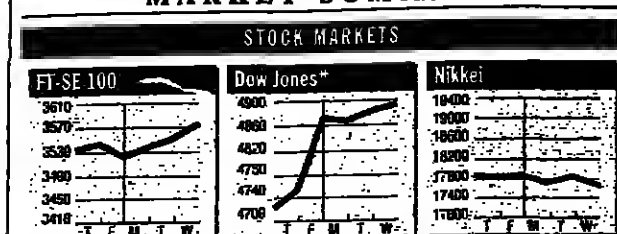
C Baye	C Baye	C Baye	
Australia/Dollars	21500	Germany/Marks	36000
Canada/Dollars	14500	Hong Kong/Dollars	10000
France/Francs	10000	Italy/Lira	20000
Japan/Yen	10000	Malaysia/Ringgit	10000
South Korea/Won	10000	Spain/Peseta	10000
Switzerland/Swiss Franc	10000	Sweden/Krona	10000
Thailand/Baht	10000	UK/Pound	10000
US/Dollars	10000	US/Dollars	10000

Source: Reuters, 1991. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 100 units of sterling.

Interest Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar			
UK	6.75%	Germany	5.50%	US	Prime	8.75%	Japan	0.50%
France	5.00%	Denmark	5.50%	France	Discount	8.25%	Belgium	1.00%
Italy	5.00%	Spain	7.75%	Spain	Discount	8.75%	Portugal	35.00%
Germany	5.50%	Sweden	5.50%	Sweden	Discount	8.75%	Switzerland	4.00%
Japan	0.50%	UK	6.75%	UK	Discount	8.75%	Denmark	5.50%
Denmark	5.50%	France	5.00%	France	Discount	8.25%	Italy	5.00%
Spain	7.75%	Germany	5.50%	Germany	Discount	8.25%	Sweden	5.50%
Sweden	5.50%	Italy	5.00%	Italy	Discount	8.25%	Switzerland	4.00%
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Belgium	1.00%	Portugal	35.00%					

MARKET SUMMARY



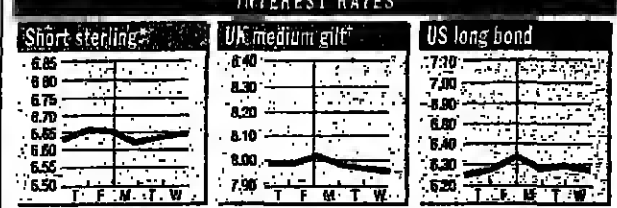
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12 Mth High	12 Mth Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3574	+123	+0.3	3950	2843	4.0
FTSE 250	3222	+35	+0.4	3593	3009	3.5
FTSE 350	1775	+10	+0.6	1983	1470	3.9
FTSE Small Cap	9369	+4	+0.0	9931	6785	3.4
FTSE All-Share	1795	+39	+0.6	1983	1470	3.9
New York	4880	+53	+0.1	4880	3678	2.4
Tokyo	17892	+186	+0.7	17730	14454	0.8
Hong Kong	9431	+240	+0.3	10329	6879	4.1
Frankfurt	2162	+11	+0.5	2370	1910	2.0
Paris	1752	+370	+0.2	2073	1721	3.2
Milan	9080	+480	+0.5	9210	8920	1.8

*New York Index & Graph at 1330 hours **FTSE/US World Index Yields

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

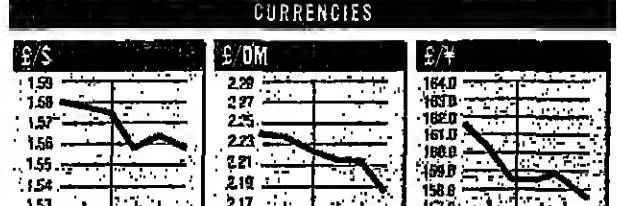
Shares	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
Wimpey (George)	127	15	13.4	Wassell	254	12	4.5
Tarmac	92.5	9	10.8	Bursell	199	7	3.6
Lloyds Chemicals	248	16	6.6	BICC	293	9	3.4
Stromberg	311	15	5.1	Stemmer Engineering	3	31	3.1
Hambros	202	9	4.7	Vendome Lux	546	15	2.7

INTEREST RATES



Money Market Rates	Bank Rates
1 Month	1 Year
UK	6.89 6.58
US	5.89 5.53
Japan	0.50 0.63
Germany	3.91 3.81

CURRENCIES



Pound	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Dollar	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
S. (London)	1579	-0.01	1573	P. (London)	0.649	0.025	0.636
S. (NY)	1580	+0.07	1573	P. (NY)	0.649	-0.04	0.636
DM (London)	2.347	-2.76p	2.437	DM (London)	1.404	-0.12p	1.53
Yen (London)	157.03	+1.06	154.95	Yen (London)	101.03	-10.05	97.9
S. Index	82.6	-0.7	79.7	S. Index	92.8	-0.3	94.2

OTHER INDICATORS

OTHER INDICATORS							
	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Fig
Oil Brent \$	16.75	+0.13	16.58	197	16.08	3.9pc	24
Gold \$	365.90	+0.05	364.4	1066	24pc	41	20 Nov
Gold £	277.1	+100	265.333	8.75pc	6.25	—	—

Sources: FT Information

IN BRIEF

Telecom Italia faces challenge

France Telecom and Olivetti, the struggling Italian computer company, are to join forces to compete against Telecom Italia in the mainstream Italian telephone market. The companies, backed by Bell Atlantic and France Telecom's partners in the Atlas joint venture, Deutsche Telekom and Sprint, believe they could win revenues of up to £2bn over five years. The announcement marks one of the first fruits of the controversial Atlas alliance grouping continental Europe's two largest telecoms operators.

Bell Cablemedia revenue rise

Bell Cablemedia, the UK cable company whose shares are listed in New York, said revenues in the nine months to September totalled £38.9m, up from £12.4m last time, while losses nearly doubled to £2.7m, reflecting the costs of building the network. Quarter-on-quarter, churn rates (the rate at which subscribers disconnect) had dropped for cable to 31.5 per cent from 38 per cent, and for telephony to 17.6 per cent from 19.5 per cent.

Unigate selling Dutch stake

Unigate, the dairy and fresh foods group, is to sell its 29 per cent stake in Nutricia, the Dutch producer of infant milk and clinical nutrition products. The stake has a market value of £23.9m and will be sold to institutional investors rather than a single buyer. It will erase Unigate's £13.4m of debts and give the company the firepower to fund further acquisitions in its core food and distribution businesses.

Investment Column, page 26

Fisons chief stepping down

Stuart Wallis, chief executive of Fisons, is expected to step down as a director in the next week or two. The move comes in the wake of last month's £1.8bn takeover by the French-owned pharmaceuticals rivals Rhone-Poulenc Rorer. With Paddy Linaker, the chairman, he will stay on at Fisons until the end of the year to ensure, among other things, that directors leaving the group are treated fairly and receive adequate compensation. Mr Wallis could be entitled to compensation of about £470,000, while netting around £1.23m profits from share options.

Eurotunnel turnover grows

Eurotunnel said its third quarter turnover, excluding rail fees of £24.7m from the minimum usage contract, was £81.265m, against £3.994m a year earlier. Turnover in the nine months to September is £151.8m, up from £5.29m, but the figures are not strictly comparable because of the gradual build-up of services since the tunnel opened in the second quarter of 1994.

Midshires plans life venture

Birmingham Midshires, one of the UK's top 10 building societies, is set to launch its own life company when its tie with Sun Life comes to an end in May. The society, based in Wolverhampton, has not decided whether to farm out the administration or enter into a joint venture with Sun Life.

Cadbury panel candidate

Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman of ICI, is on the point of accepting the chairmanship of the panel on corporate governance, which is to take over the work of the Cadbury Committee, an official involved in setting up the new panel confirmed.

High fliers: A code-sharing agreement would create one of the biggest airline alliances in aviation history

BA and American seek skies pact

RUSSELL HOTTEN

British Airways is negotiating with American Airlines about a code-sharing deal that would create one of the biggest alliances in aviation history. The talks, which started last April, have been given a new impetus by the replacement of BA's strong-willed chief executive, Sir Colin Marshall, by Robert Ayling.

A personality clash between Sir Colin and American's equally tough chairman, Robert Crandall, was said to be a potential stumbling block to any agreement. "A deal with Sir Colin would not be impossible, but Crandall is an admirer of Ayling and likes what he is doing at BA," said an American source close to American. "An agreement with BA would be Crandall's swan song."

Code sharing involves the merger of two airlines' flights on one ticket, allowing them to book passengers with each other. The talks centre on how BA would benefit from access to America's services to South America. American would want to be able to book its passengers onto BA's Heathrow and European network.

The two airlines have discussed possible equity stakes, though there is said to be much hard negotiating still to do. A broad outline agreement is close, but a formal announcement may take up to 12 months,

the Independent has been told.

A big hurdle to a deal is the implications for USAir, with which BA has a code-share agreement, and 24.6 per cent stake. American Airlines sources said US transport officials have indicated that any deal that threatened the future of USAir would be resisted.

USAir has been the subject of takeover talk, with United Airlines a likely bidder. American also said it might enter the bidding if a rival made a formal offer. But on Monday United said it was no longer interested in buying USAir.

BA has admitted that the question of USAir ownership opened up several options, including links with other US carriers. Sources confirmed last night yesterday that talks with

American began long before

United's interest in USAir was announced. BA refused to comment on any talks with American.

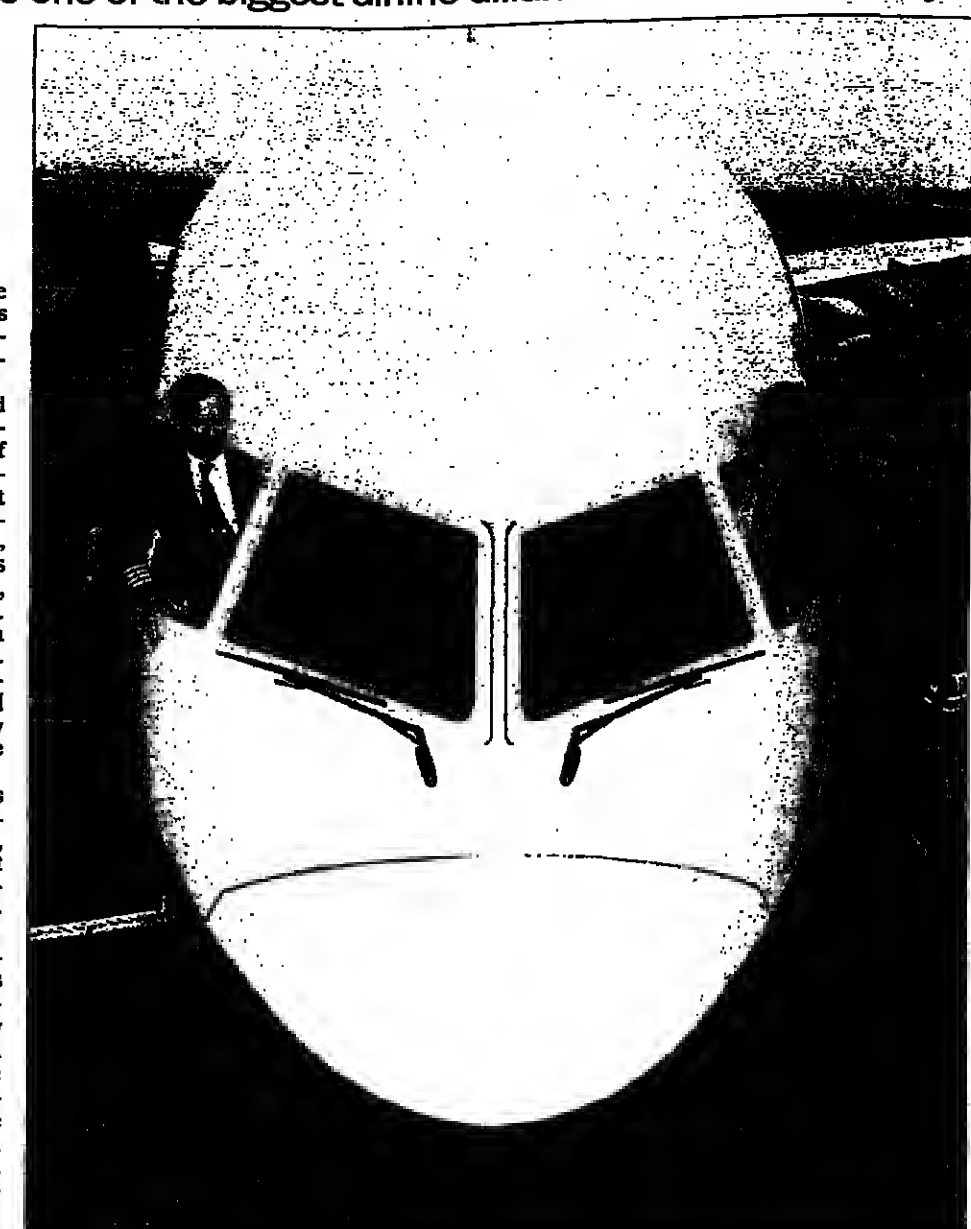
Industry experts remained sceptical about any such agreement being reached because of the complexity of bringing together two of the world's largest airlines. Keith McMullan, of analysts Avmark International, said American had held talks with European airlines before, but they had come to nothing. "Robert Crandall has been a critic of code sharing," he said. But it is understood Mr Crandall and the American board now accept that as the industry moves towards greater code sharing, it must move with it.

American is the world's largest airline, with 647 aircraft and sales of \$14bn (£9bn), and there are few operators that could provide the sort of reciprocal benefits it would find attractive through code sharing. But the company would likely to offer its US passengers onward flights to Europe and beyond by using BA's Heathrow services as the hub. In return, BA would like an entry into the growing South American passenger market, which has been largely untapped by European carriers, except by Spain's Iberia.

An executive at a rival airline said yesterday he would expect America's rivals in the US to protest loudly against any deal as anti-competitive.



Robert Crandall: Previously a critic of code-sharing



The right stuff: BA's new chief executive Robert Ayling (right) is admired by American

Resignation of Middleton shocks Lloyd's

DAVID HELLIER AND JOHN EISENHAMMER

Peter Middleton last night shocked the world's largest insurance market by resigning as chief executive of Lloyd's of London two years before his contract was due to expire.

His resignation comes at a critical stage in Lloyd's fight for survival, embroiled in complex negotiations over its £6bn reconstruction and renewal programme. Alongside David Rowland, chairman, Mr Middleton was lynch-pin of Lloyd's attempts to restore its battered credibility, and negotiate a settlement with the thousands of loss-making names who have ravaged the insurer with litigation and refusals to cover their liabilities.

Mr Middleton, 55, is going to become chief executive for the UK and Europe at Salomon Brothers, the international investment bank in London. He will be replaced by Ron Sandler, 43, appointed earlier this year to implement the reconstruction and renewal programme.

In a blunt statement last night, Lloyd's said Mr Middleton had resigned. It gave no reason for his abrupt departure. Mr Sandler said: "I think the timing is certainly not what all of us would have wished, but it is up to us to get on with the job."

Mr Middleton informed Mr Rowland last Friday.

In August, Mr Middleton said that he intended to stay on until the recovery of the trou-

ble insurance market was complete. He said then: "We [he and the chairman, David Rowland] have stated that we are not going to leave until we have done all that we have set out to do; and we will leave in an orderly fashion." He said this was unlikely to be before 1997.

In the past 12 months there have been increasing rumours in the market of a deteriorating relationship between Mr Middleton and Mr Rowland.

This is the second recent high-profile departure. Rosalind Gilmore, former head of Lloyd's regulation, suddenly quit after just a year in the job.

Mr Middleton was unavailable for comment last night, but said in a formal statement issued by Lloyd's: "I am sad to be leaving Lloyd's after three challenging and enjoyable years. Working with David Rowland has been the most rewarding business experience of my career."

Mr Sandler was recruited by Lloyd's in March this year as a director of special projects. He is said to have played a key role in the development of the Lloyd's reconstruction plan, published in May.

Sir Lawrie Magnus, of Phoenix Securities, who was involved in the introduction to Lloyd's of corporate capital, said: "Ron Sandler is held in high regard by practitioners in the market and by most corporate capital providers." But his departure was deplored by some names who supply capital.

Comment, page 25

Pearson in talks to buy SelecTV

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Pearson is in talks with management at SelecTV, the independent production company, that could lead to a bid within weeks, sources close to the negotiations said.

Separately, the media and information giant yesterday announced it had clinched a \$40m deal to buy ACI, a US television programming supplier owned by eight leading US independent producers.

Sources close to SelecTV said talks were continuing between its chairman, Alan McKewen, and representatives from Pearson about the terms of a public offer for SelecTV shares. However, it is believed several other potential bidders

remain in the frame, and that the two sides remain far apart on price.

Mr McKewen, founder of SelecTV, owns about 7 per cent, and is directly involved in the negotiations on behalf of the board. He is expected to recommend an offer from Pearson only at a large premium to the current market price of 31.5p, which values the company at about £45m.

Other potential stumbling blocks include the terms on which Mr McKewen would continue to work with the company after a sale. Daily Mail and General Trust, which owns 14 per cent of SelecTV, is not directly involved in the negotiations at this stage.

Pearson is believed to have discussed a side deal with MAI

that would see Lord Hollick's

media and financial services company buy SelecTV's 19 per cent stake in Meridian Broadcasting, the ITV licence holder controlled by MAI.

Pearson is thought to be attracted by SelecTV's programming library and its independent production operations, which would be folded into Pearson TV.

It has no interest, it is understood, in the company's cable channel.

SelecTV makes such hit programmes as *Birds of a Feather*, *Lovejoy* and *Love Hurts*.

Pearson TV, run by Greg Dyke, the former LWT chief, already owns Thames Television and Grampian Worldwide, makers of *Neighbours*. The purchase of ACI, which has long

been rumoured, gives Pearson

a new source of programming revenues and access to an extensive library. ACI also has a supply deal with Channel 5 Broadcasting, the winning bidder for Channel 5, in which Pearson has a stake.

ACI supplies 20 per cent of the made-for-TV movies shown on US networks, and also buys programming from overseas. The eight key producers have promised to funnel their programming through ACI for at least five years.

Unaudited figures show an operating profit of \$2.8m in the year to September 1995, before costs associated with the sale to Pearson, on revenues of \$30.7m. Pearson is paying \$4.5m in cash and loan notes, and another \$20m over seven years.

Hambros makes changes at top

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Hambros yesterday announced a management shake-up, staff cuts, and a re-focusing on its classic merchant banking activities in a drive to restore profitability and repair its deteriorating image in the market.

Sir Chips Keswick, formerly chairman and chief executive of the bank, moves up to the newly created position of group chief executive, while Michael Sorkin, the driving force behind the changes, becomes deputy chairman of the bank and head of the management committee implementing the new strategy.

Reporting a £7.7m pre-tax loss, after a heavy £23.5m bad

debt provision and £8.8m restructuring costs, Hambros said

yesterday it will be cutting back its ordinary corporate lending operations to concentrate on specialist business, while strengthening its corporate finance and investment management activities.

Coming on top of the closure of Hambros Clearing and the sale of its Australian stock-broking business, the planned reductions in corporate lending and treasury and derivatives operations will result in a 10 per cent reduction in banking staff, currently totalling 200.

The group structure is to be clarified, bringing the development capital business into the bank, while emphasising the distinctness from the separately

listed insurance and estate agency businesses.

Hambros said it intends to build up its corporate finance department under Nigel Pantling, including further hirings. The bank is also assessing its options with a view to increasing its £50m of funds under management by "several billions" of equity funds, either by acquisition or joint-venture, but said it is not yet talking to any potential target.

"We are saying to the world at large, we have two businesses and you seem not to understand which is the more important, the merchant bank or the estate agencies. We are making absolutely clear that merchant banking is the heart of the business, and there are

two other businesses tacked alongside it," said Sir Chips.

IBCA, the bank credit rating agency, yesterday downgraded Hambros' individual ratings from B/C to C, citing the deterioration in performance.

The new strategy was accompanied by a mild reshuffle, although no new faces were brought in. Sir Chips and Michael Sorkin are now in the driving seat, assisted by Charles Furrin, who becomes chief executive of the bank. The main victim is Christopher Sporborg, who relinquishes his job as chief executive of Hambro group investments to become chairman of the estate agency and insurance businesses.

The share price closed up 9p at 202p.

Economy: The prospect of lower borrowing costs in the UK and America knocks currencies but boosted bonds and shares

Pound plunges to all-time low

PAUL WALLACE
Economics Editor

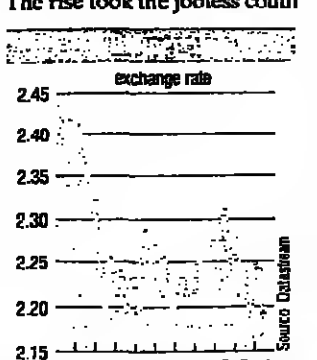
The pound tumbled to an all-time low as a rise in unemployment and fall in retail sales led to mounting worries about a cut-and-run Budget and an early fall in interest rates.

The trade-weighted exchange rate fell from \$3.3 to \$2.6, just below its previous all-time low of \$2.7 on 27 June. Sterling weakened against the dollar but the main fall was against the Deutschmark. It dropped by three pence to end the day at 2.1847, only a pence higher than its all-time low of 2.1765 on 9 May.

"Given the political climate and the proximity of the Budget, foreign investors have gone on a buying strike," said Kit Juckes, currency strategist with NatWest Markets. "There is a general nervousness in the mar-

kets that you'll get an insufficiently rigorous Budget and that interest rates will be cut before long."

Unemployment rose by 200 in October, the first increase since August 1993, and in marked contrast with the City expectation of a fall of 12,000. The rise took the jobless count



to 2,265,500, 8.1 per cent of the workforce. Weakness in industry appears to have been mainly responsible. While the jobless count continued to fall across much of the country, this was offset by increases in the industrial regions of the East Midlands, the North-west and Wales. Employment in manufacturing fell in September by 3,000.

However, official statisticians warned that the increase was the result of an unusually large seasonal adjustment and was subject to revision, just as the provisional rise in July turned in the event into a small fall. The unadjusted figure fell by almost 80,000 as graduates who had come onto the count in the summer got jobs or moved back to higher education.

More encouragingly, new vacancies were at their highest for six years and placements,

helped by a national advertising campaign, reached an all-time high. Underlying earnings remained flat in September at 3.25 per cent and those in manufacturing edged down to 4.25 per cent in both August and September.

Hopes that retail sales would revive in October were dashed by figures showing a small monthly fall of 0.1 per cent. The annual growth in retail sales, using the more accurate three-month or three-month rate, slackened to just 0.1 per cent, its lowest for three and a half years. The decline in sales was concentrated in clothing and footwear stores, which saw a fall of 1.4 per cent in October. Sales in food stores also dropped by 0.4 per cent.

The British Retail Consortium called for "a sustainable tax-cutting package" in the Budget.

Fears of US interest rate cut hurts dollar

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

A drop in industrial output for the first time in six months fanned hopes of an early cut in US interest rates, even though the Federal Reserve took no action after its policy meeting yesterday.

The prospect of lower interest rates in Europe as well as in the US took European bonds and shares higher yesterday. The biggest advances were in France, where the government announced a far tougher-than-expected supplementary budget, which could allow an easing in interest rates.

German markets also reacted to a fall in the Bundesbank's repo rate by two basis points to 3.98 per cent, hinting

at further cuts in key interest rates. The Bundesbank council meets today but is not expected to act immediately.

Interest rate expectations, along with uncertainty over the outcome of the stalemate between President Bill Clinton and Congress over the budget, weakened the dollar yesterday. Investors are worried about the danger of a default on US government debt.

David Bloom, US economist for brokers James Capel, said: "There is a growing risk that the two sides will turn the budget into an election issue." Political uncertainty could also knock momentum out of the economy. The Fed last cut interest rates, by a quarter point to 5.75 per cent, in July. Its next meeting is on 19 December.

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Lloyd's resignation adds to risks in row with names

COMMENT

With the interests of different groups of [Lloyd's] names so at variance with each other, settlement requires a brilliant financier, a master tactician ... and a diplomat of the first order

Peter Middleton's resignation as chief executive of the Lloyd's of London insurance market could hardly have come at a worse time for the embattled organisation. Lloyd's is now at a highly sensitive point in negotiations about a settlement with its loss-making names. Their successes in the courts over the last year have transformed the balance of power. Lloyd's must reach a deal or face terminal decline.

There has been and remains a very real risk, in the absence of a settlement, that at some point the Department of Trade and Industry will find it impossible to continue to issue Lloyd's with a solvency certificate. That is the nuclear outcome but it is one that looks all too possible for this deeply troubled organisation. There will be some in this intensely combative market who will greet Mr Middleton's departure with relief. Rosalind Gilmore, the head of regulation who left recently after a year in the job, kept silent about the reasons for her departure but it would surprise nobody if one of her reasons was the difficulty of coping with the old guard that still exists at Lloyd's despite all it has been through.

Mr Middleton, despite his protestations yesterday that he enjoyed working with David Rowland, the chairman, has had a tense enough relationship with him. When in public together, this was painfully visible. The very difficulty of the situation could be a good enough reason for bringing in a new chief executive, since a fresh pair of eyes may

see new solutions. None the less, many will see Mr Middleton's departure as a deepening of the crisis.

With the interests of different groups of names so at variance with each other, settlement requires a brilliant financier, a master tactician and a diplomat of the first order. Ron Sandler, Mr Middleton's replacement, was responsible for setting up Equitas, the financial vehicle at the heart of the rescue plan, and there is little doubt that he has the technical qualifications for the job.

On the other hand, it was Mr Middleton who appeared to be pushing earlier than his chairman for the much-needed renewal of attempts to resurrect the settlement with names that failed in late 1993. And it is he who knows the details of the tortuous negotiations and the sensitivities of all the individuals with whom he has dealt.

A genuine win-win deal

When two companies describe a deal as a "win-win situation" you can normally be sure that at least one of the parties is either being disingenuous or has missed something. Yesterday's unexpected asset swap between Wimpey and Tarmac, however, appears to come close to finding the corporate philosopher's stone. If it sets the ball rolling on the much-needed consolidation of the UK's beleaguered construction

industry, it will be seen as a watershed. Having hoisted the For Sale sign over its housing operation in August, Tarmac came in for a welter of not unreasonable criticism. As a forced seller, it would be pushed to achieve not assets of just over £300m, let alone the £400m it was privately hoping for. The cash would then burn a hole in its pocket, be spent in a hurry and unwisely, even worse from the City's point of view, it would dilute earnings.

Exchanging the division for Wimpey's quarrying and contracting arms addresses all those issues and leaves its partner smiling as well. At a stroke, Wimpey becomes the dominant force in UK housing with a market share twice its nearest rivals, Beazer and Barratt. Both companies have also nearly avoided the twin likelihoods of having to sell assets at a discount and paying a premium when they come to spend the proceeds.

Which will be the long-term winner is a harder call. Wimpey faces a stagnant domestic market and a massive extra cash drain on its resources - it will cost £200m a year just to replace the land it builds on. Tarmac, by contrast, has increased its exposure to a road programme the Government is showing increasing signs of abandoning, together with the supply of roads, and blacktop that depends on it. On the other hand, with £1.75bn of turnover to play with, the potential for profit growth is large. Squeezing even a little more margin out of that scale of revenue will bring rich bottom-line rewards.

It has been a dismal year for the building industry as the hoped-for recovery disappeared over the horizon. Compared with a soaring stock market, the sector has been a damp squib, underperforming the All Share by 15 per cent. For the 1990s so far as a whole, building shares have underperformed the market by a half. Now that Wimpey and Tarmac have actually done something to correct the obvious overcapacity problem in these industries, rather than just talk about it, perhaps others will follow suit.

Rail link shows hopeful signs

The charade that is the Government's attempt to persuade the private sector to build and operate a high-speed rail link between London and the Channel Tunnel seems to have taken a turn for the better. The Department of Transport has brought in a BP seconded to adjudicate over the final stages of selection for the £3bn project. Ministers took the view that only someone with private sector negotiating skills would be up to the task of exacting the best possible deal from the two remaining bidders, Eurotunnel (a consortium of BICC, Trafalgar House, Seaboard, HSB and NatWest) and London & Continental (Virgin). Over Arup and Bechtel among others.

The Government is due to announce its preferred bidder before Christmas. For

work to begin, however, first requires legislation, while the contractors, determined to avoid the cost overruns and other pitfalls that bedevilled Eurotunnel, want at least a year of detailed design and engineering planning before even putting a spade to the earth.

The private sector adjudicator is John Hawkshaw, provided gratis by BP for as long as it takes to complete the negotiation. This is being conducted in almost comic fashion with the Eurotunnel team taking the morning session and the rivals the afternoon. The bidders' lunch break between is thought sufficient to prevent the two from meeting. The Government's purpose is to ensure that the level of subsidy (anything between £1bn and £2bn) is as small as possible. But there is a variable - the degree of risk that is assumed by the winning bidder. The higher degree of risk assumed by the successful bidder, the higher the level of subsidy demanded.

None of this means the high-speed link is actually going to get built. Post-Eurotunnel, bankers are doubly cautious in backing infrastructure projects of this sort. So are the equity investors that both consortia intend to tap. Even so, prospects for this badly needed venture now look better than at any stage in the last five years. With the more diligent approach to costs being adopted by all involved, as well as the revenue stream of Eurostar, the project looks a more hopeful private sector bet than the tunnel it will one day service.

British Gas calls for help as profits slump

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

British Gas warned of a profits fall yesterday and called on the Government to help bail it out of heavy losses on its North Sea supply contracts. The company is seeking relief from the levy it pays on gas from North Sea fields, which at present costs £170m annually.

The warning was accompanied by a statement from Richard Giordano, the chair-

man, which was seen as a hint that the company might be broken up. He said: "The board ... is addressing the longer-term options open to us, to ensure we maximise value for shareholders."

The statement fuelled speculation that the company plans to sell off the gas trading operations, which are already set to be put into a separate subsidiary.

British Gas also cast doubt on the Government's plans to introduce domestic competition by April 1996, after delays in fi-

nalising legislation. The Government has put great store on plans for a pilot scheme in the South-west, which it is hoped will slash gas prices and help restore the damaged public reputation of privatised utilities.

The company said exceptionally warm weather could result in underlying profits dropping below last year's £927m. British Gas announced an historic loss of £181m in the third quarter, compared with a loss of £149m in the same period last year.

The loss is after provisions of £83m related to long-term contracts for gas the company must buy but for which there is yet no market. The company also said that under the contracts it would be forced to make a £520m pre-payment in the current quarter for gas not used.

Mr Giordano called on the Government to help the company renegotiate these "take or pay" contracts, the effect of which he said is impossible to quantify. He said that the situ-

ation would be exacerbated by the introduction of domestic competition next year, adding: "The Government has taken decisions to change the structure of the market. We expect them to do everything in their power to ensure that the contracts are renegotiated."

British Gas, whose share of the commercial and industrial gas market has already fallen to about 35 per cent, argues that the contracts with North Sea producers were entered into

when it had a monopoly and an obligation to supply. But the producers say that they have to have regard to the interests of their own shareholders, and not those of British Gas.

As part of its plea for government help, British Gas has raised the issue of reducing or abolishing the state levy on North Sea gas supplies imposed before privatisation.

Mr Giordano said: "The significant surplus of gas currently available in the UK market,

the consequent rapid decline in gas prices and the significant enforced loss of market share in the industrial and commercial market are the main factors affecting the outlook of British Gas. If the exceptionally warm weather experienced to date continues into the fourth quarter, our full-year earnings for 1995 on a pre-exceptional basis will be below the level achieved in 1994."

The unusually warm weather has cost British Gas £120m

in the nine months to 30 September, and an estimated £50m in October alone. Mr Giordano said that in spite of the problems, the board intends to maintain the dividend for 1995. Shares fell by 4p to 241.5p.

British Gas also faces continued regulatory threat from the watchdog Ofgas, which is reviewing the price controls for domestic customers and the amount it will be able to charge rival suppliers to use its pipes. *Investment, page 26*

Profits from Grid may be capped

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry watchdog, warned that the National Grid Company could face a cap on profits in future, or a sharing of dividends between customers and shareholders.

The suggestion comes weeks before the planned £3.5bn flotation of the Grid, owned by the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales.

In a consultative document issued yesterday on the future control of the NGC, Professor Littlechild asked for views on whether the price control system used at present should be scrapped.

The Grid currently keeps transmission charges to inflation minus three percentage points, but the formula expires in early 1997.

Professor Littlechild said the new control could "relate to profits or to some form of sliding scale involving prices, profits and perhaps dividends".

He also asked for views on "the basis for NGC's shareholders to receive an appropriate return, and the means of assessing this".

One City analyst said: "This shows that regulatory risk remains a big negative. It would not be good news if profit-capping was to be implemented." Even if the present system of price-capping continued, the future formula was likely to be tougher and could involve a one-off cut of up to 15 per cent.

A spokesman for the Grid said: "This is only the first communication in a discussion and we will respond in due course."

Market unimpressed with Jakarta's telecom sell-off



The Jakarta Stock Exchange last night held a special session to mark the debut in New York and London of shares in PT Telkom, the privatised Indonesian telecoms operator. The issue had a lukewarm response in international markets, and the government raised about \$600m from overseas investors, against a target of \$1.7bn. The price was set at \$18 per American Depositary Share.

KKR sizes up Littlewoods bid

NIGEL COPE

The UK arm of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the American leveraged buy-out specialist, has confirmed an interest in bidding for Littlewoods, the retail and football pools empire. The interest could spark a bid battle for the Liverpool-based group, which is already the subject of a £1.2bn indicative offer from its former chief executive, Barry Dale.

Though no formal representation has been made to the Liverpool-based company, the KKR team is said to be "watching the situation closely". KKR is thought to have management candidates in mind to run Littlewoods if it makes a formal offer. However it has de-

nied it is backing Tony Fitzsimons, the former chief executive of the Bristol & West Building Society.

Littlewoods said last night it had received no contact from KKR though it added that further bid interest would come as no surprise. KKR's UK division, called Glenisla, is led by Ian Martin, the former chief executive of Burger King, who joined as UK chief executive earlier this year.

The group was involved in early discussions with Mr Dale, but decided not to take its involvement further at that time. Mr Dale is now being advised by merchant bank Dawson Day and has financial backing from blue-chip venture capital groups.

Any KKR offer would pose a serious threat to Mr Dale's consortium. Mr Dale was ousted from the group last year and is unlikely to be popular with some factions of the Moores family, which controls all the Littlewoods shares.

Mr Dale's consortium recognises the risk of its bid being used as a stalking horse for another group that may ultimately be more successful. However it is sceptical KKR is genuinely interested in taking its interest much further.

The Dale consortium is expected to strengthen its management team with a high-profile chairman who would be widely respected by the Moores family. The group has made approaches to one or

two "captains of industry" who have expressed an interest. If the bid was successful, Mr Dale would be chief executive and John Coleman, the former chief executive of Texas Home care, would be managing director of the retail division.

So far only Mr Dale's consortium has made an indicative offer. Littlewoods has called an emergency general meeting next month, when the 32 members of the Moores family who own all the shares in the company will decide whether or not to take the bid further and allow the Dale consortium access to the Littlewoods books.

Littlewoods' retail and pools businesses has been struggling. Last year it reported flat profit of £110m on sales of £2.7bn.

BICC axe falls on cable side

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

BICC, the cables to contracting group, confirmed the pressures squeezing the construction industry by taking the axe to its low-voltage cables business, shedding up to 900 jobs at a cost of £80m. The group also said it was in negotiations that might lead to the sale of its house-building operation and warned that difficult trading conditions would lead to lower-than-expected full-year pre-tax profits.

Alan Jones, chief executive, said the majority of the job losses were likely to be made in its KWO cables plant in Germany, but there would also be cuts in the UK and North America. BICC has already cut 400 German jobs and the latest round of cuts will bring its workforce there to under 1,000.

Germany has suffered heavily from the difficult trading conditions affecting the construction and cables market across Europe. BICC will make an £80m charge to cover the cost of the cables rationalisation, of which about half will cover redundancy and plant closure costs.

The decision to reduce capacity follows a decision to move the group's activities towards higher value-added operations such as electronic speciality and optical cables. Low-voltage cables have generated a low return on capital, squeezed by rising copper prices and intense competition.

BICC had already flagged its intention to withdraw from the house-building market, one of a growing number of companies that has decided this year against continuing the struggle with the moribund homes market. It confirmed yesterday that any sale would result in a good-will write-off of up to £44m.

Tarmac swaps houses for roads

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

The long-awaited consolidation of the troubled UK building industry was kick-started yesterday by the unexpected announcement that Tarmac is to swap its house-building operation, Britain's second largest, for Wimpey's construction and minerals activities.

The City welcomed the deal with Tarmac's shares closing 10.5p higher at 93.5p, a 13 per cent rise. Wimpey was marked 15p higher at 127p, a similar increase. Both shares have underperformed sharply over the past year as trading conditions have deteriorated.

Following the deal, Wimpey will dominate the UK new-

house market, building an estimated 15,000 houses a year. Joe Dwyer, the company's chief executive, said Wimpey had targeted 20,000 houses a year after expansion of its operations in the US and Australia.

Tarmac becomes Britain's leading road-builder and aggregates producer, generating substantial asset backing for what is expected to be a leading role in the Government's private finance initiative. Industry observers believe the PFI will be dominated by large, financially strong companies.

Both companies described the asset swap, which puts a value of about £320m on Tarmac's housing operation, as a "win-win situation". Tarmac signalled in August that it

planned to withdraw from house building, but yesterday's deal confirmed that neither company could continue to fund expansion of a range of businesses and would need to focus on only one of their existing divisions.

By swapping assets in this way, the companies avoid accepting a discount to underlying value in the disposal of unwanted divisions, and the need to pay a premium when the funds raised are reinvested.

Neville Simms, Tarmac's chief executive, said the deal answered criticisms levelled in August that the sale of housing would fail to achieve asset value, that Tarmac would be unable to reinvest the funds effectively and that earnings per share

would be diluted. The deal was confirmation of his confidence in the long-term future of the construction industry, which has been plagued by overcapacity and low demand.

Analysts welcomed the deal but some expressed concern over the large cash demands Wimpey would face running a house-building company with a land-bank of more than 30,000 plots. Mr Dwyer expected to spend in excess of £200m a year simply replacing the land consumed by new houses.

Wimpey estimates that it will control about 10 per cent of the UK's new-build housing market following the merger. Barratt and Beazer, the next largest rivals, have market shares of only about 4 per cent.

Associated British Foods

The Chairman reports on a year of progress

Sales increased by 9 per cent and profits before tax by 16 per cent.

Expenditure on new assets and subsidiaries amounted to £355 million. A major acquisition at the end of the year was a leading speciality oils and fats based food ingredients group in the United States.

A bonus issue of ordinary shares is proposed. The second interim dividend will be paid on the increased share capital, and is a 9.4 per cent increase on the previous year.

	1995 £ million	1994 £ million
Summary of results		
Turnover	4,894	4,478
Profit before tax	375	324
Shareholders' funds	2,258	2,090
Dividends per share (on the increased number of shares)	8.75p	8.00p

The above are extracts from the Annual Report and Accounts 1995 sent to shareholders on 15th November 1995.

Associated British Foods plc,
Weston Centre, 68 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7LQ, England.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

British Gas looks past its woes

So many things have gone wrong for British Gas this year that it is beginning to look like an orchestrated campaign. But it has been at some cost to British Gas shares, which have slumped from a January high of 316.5p to yesterday's 243p, up 2.5p on the day.

The company has suffered a haemorrhage in market share in its industrial and commercial markets. From close to 60 per cent last year, it now commands less than 35 per cent of the market. Prices have tumbled on the back of the current UK gas surplus.

The problem has been exacerbated for British Gas by its long-term "take-or-pay" contracts. These could result in it paying £520m this year for gas it has not used but is still forced to pay for.

To add to this litany of woes, the company has now warned that this year's spell of fine weather will push full-year earnings below last year's level. The cost to operating profits so far in 1995 has already been £120m and with a further £85m provision for take-or-pay pre-payments, the company did well to hold the fall in nine-month profits to £103m, leaving the pre-tax total at £721m.

Despite all this blood and gore, British Gas remains confident enough of its future to confirm its intention to hold this year's dividend at last year's level of 14.5p. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that some of the problems are being overplayed by the company as a negotiating stance ahead of the review by its regulator, Ofgas, of the price formula for TransCo, the newly segregated gas pipeline and storage business. What Ofgas decides could have a dramatic impact on the value of the company, with one analyst estimating that a negative outcome would be equivalent to slicing £1bn off revenues over the three years to 1997.

Meanwhile, cost savings from the 1993 restructuring plan – now expected to be £200m this year – are merely offsetting the erosion of the company's business and commercial market share. To keep moving ahead, British Gas will need to find further savings when the domestic market is opened to competition later in the decade.

The political game could have further to go. One possibility is that the company could raise the stakes further with the regulator and the politicians by threatening to walk away from its onerous gas contracts. But while those contracts remain, there are a big obstacle to demerger plans, which management are now thought to see as a

way of unlocking shareholder value. Meanwhile, investors can expect underlying profits of close to £970m this year, putting the shares on a prospective multiple of 11. With a yield of 7.5 per cent, they are worth holding.

Unigate sale opens new doors

For a company that has shed more than its fair share of tears over the spillages of the new Milk Marque regime, Unigate was remarkably quiet on the issue yesterday. This was in spite of a fall in the company's dairy profits from £18.5m to £16.5m and an acceleration in the decline of doorstep milk deliveries, which still account for 40 per cent of Unigate's milk business.

Management did not even blurt too loudly about supermarket pressure on margins, or the weather.

In a year that has seen a summer heatwave turn into a winter of discontent for many food companies, this was an impressively upbeat performance. The 12.5 per cent hike in half-year profits to £60m will have

helped management's mood. But the other key reason for the company's spirited stance is that a diversification away from the troubled milk sector is looking ever more achievable.

Over the past five years Unigate has been divesting core businesses, such as car dealerships and animal feed, to concentrate solely on its food and distribution businesses. Giltspur, the American exhibitions business was sold for £40m last month. And the poorly-performing US restaurants business, which includes the Black-Eye Pea and Taco Bueno chains, is also up for sale, even if its recent performance, which saw profits halve from £6m to £3m in the half-year, hardly makes it an attractive prospect.

But the big step forward was yesterday's decision to sell its 29 per cent stake in Nutricia. Having watched its value double to an estimated £329m, Unigate has decided that now is the time to realise the value and put the cash to better use. The proceeds will wipe out Unigate's debts and give it the funds to buy more businesses in its two main sectors.

Hazlewood Foods has long been mentioned as a target when the Nutricia stake was sold. Tibbet & Britten,

the distribution group is another possibility. After plunging to 210p three years ago, Unigate shares have enjoyed a good run since and closed 7p higher yesterday at 432p. On a forward rating of 12 they still look undervalued.

Euro Disney riding for a fall

Euro Disney's shares lost a tenth of their value yesterday, falling 21p to 194p, but it is not clear how the market arrives at even that lowly valuation. Despite the turnaround from losses of £1.8bn (£245m) to a £62m profit in the year to September, the company still has a financial mountain to climb.

Euro Disney's accounts are an accounting mirage. It would be wallowing knee-deep in red ink without goodwill from banks, which granted a holiday on annual interest payments totalling £160m, and Disney's waiver on management fees and royalties.

From next year, the financial props will start to be removed, and it would take a brave investor to bet. Euro Disney will be capable of standing on its own feet. Just to cover the increase in interest costs of £147m by 1998, and the start of royalty and management payments to Disney in 1999, the theme park, tour operations and hotels will have to raise revenues by at least 5 per cent each year.

Boosting footfall through the gate might be achievable, but raising spending on food, drinks and merchandise will prove a bigger challenge. Gate receipts only account for 25 per cent of total revenues. The currency markets aren't helping much, either. A devaluation of the French franc would make a world of difference, in particular for the British, who have easy access to France but can't afford to go.

The rollercoaster ride of Euro Disney's shares over the years makes the white-knuckle experience of the park's Space Mountain pale. It is showing no sign of slowing, with the venture's finances looking as vulnerable as ever. The banks have already lumbered themselves with 15 per cent of the shares by swapping debt for equity, and would almost certainly strongly resist accumulating more paper given that Euro Disney still plans to build a second park and will knock on their doors for development funds. Other investors should tread warily.

Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

Mind over matter at Orange County jail

Robert Citron, the man who presided over the worst municipal financial collapse in US history, presents his country with another first. The 70-year-old treasurer – now awaiting sentencing on six charges relating to the bankruptcy of Orange County – has instructed his lawyers to go for what the Americans call the Saunders defence.

In fact Ernest Saunders' Alzheimer's condition had no effect on his sentencing in the Guinness trial. It merely speeded his parole. Still, Mr Citron's lawyers are now claiming that their client is also suffering from dementia.

The notion that the former county treasurer was not feeling himself when he lost \$1.6bn on complex derivatives positions will be put forcefully. The defence submission speaks of "cognitive defects and symptoms of dementia that afflicted and still afflict" Mr Citron.

Which is probably just as well. California takes a dim view of municipal collapse. Mr Citron is looking at 14 years if the judges get out on the wrong side of bed.

While publicly condemning the impasse between Democrat President and Republican Congress, corporate America is privately whooping for joy. The shutdown of the government has saved US public companies approximately \$9m in the first 24 hours, with the promise of more to come.

The windfall is the result of a lifting of the financial yoke that is the Securities and Exchange Commission. US public companies are required to file SEC returns virtually every other minute, and at considerable cost. The government down-tools has meant the SEC abandoning its recent price rise and filing costs have been cut in half.

News is not so good on the economic front, however. There is concern that statisticians will no longer be able to comb supermarkets looking



Our photograph today shows Matthew Bourne's current production of Swan Lake at Sadler's Wells. Equally it could be a management training session at Lloyds Bank. Lloyds is keen to exploit the hitherto undiscovered synergies between banking and ballet dancing and has sent 16 bank managers to the Chichester Festival Theatre – for some management tuition from the London City Ballet dancers.

"A successful ballet production is all about teamwork, talent, creativity, strategic planning, attention to detail and a focus on the target audience," says Lloyds' director Tony Bird. "Skills that are equally applicable in banking." Jo Carter, London City Ballet's stage manager was equally enthusiastic, claiming that Lloyds will "learn the magic of a final performance combines vision, stamina and teamwork."

Sell the shares. Photograph: PA

for price rises. Inflation figures could soon go badly awry, economists warn. Make the most of yesterday's.

The talk in the watering holes that serve the financial services community is that BAI, owner of Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar, is poised to buy a building society. No idle gossip this, according to drinkers. They claim the plan is fully primed.

Amid the continuing merger rumours that so far have linked everyone with everyone the firm favourite to emerge is Bradford & Bingley. This would come as a rude shock to John

and oft-quoted building society pundit who left the City to join the Yorkshire society. Mr Wriglesworth never ceases to trumpet the merits of mutualism and how the B&B must remain independent. We shall see. Bristol & West may also be in the frame.

The Automobile Association is contemplating a temporary halt to the aggressive promotion of its car security devices. Both its shops that specialise in the alarms, locks and immobilisers – in Sheffield and Ashton-under-Lyne – have been burgled.

If you are offered a stolen burglar alarm, you know where it came from.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Gas (Q3)	5919m (£378m)	721m (£24m)	10.4p (11.5p)	..
Commercial Union (Q3)	6.35m (£4.50m)	369m (£27m)	46.2p (51.9p)	..
Dawson Intl (Q3)	168m (£24.6m)	9.0m (£1.8m)	3.8p (6.1p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Forward Group (Q3)	20.5m (£10.5m)	2.01m (£0.94m)	14.2p (7.5p)	3.2p (2.5p)
Germany Holdings (Q3)	5.56m (£17m)	0.56m (£0.92m)	1.96p (3.39p)	0.5p (1p)
Hambleton (Q3)	24.4m (£25.2m)	1.1m (£1.5m)	10.9p (4.3p)	2.5p (4.5p)
Land Securities (Q3)	228m (£238m)	118m (£118m)	16.48p (£16.81p)	7.1p (£6.85p)
Millwall (Q3)	4.33m (£3.81m)	-0.58m (£-1.2m)	-0.10p (-0.04p)	nil (nil)
Orsted Instruments (Q3)	65.5m (£5.1m)	9m (£7.8m)	11.9p (10.4p)	1.5p (1.7p)
Unigate (Q3)	1.07m (£4.3m)	60.4m (£3.7m)	18.6p (16.4p)	6.65p (6.3p)
Value (Q3)	88.5m (£78.1m)	5.16m (£5.84m)	12.4p (14.1p)	7p (£6.7p)
VTR (Q3)	12.2m (£1.1m)	1.50m (£1.34m)	10.48p (10.53p)	4.4p (???)

(F) - Full (Q) - Interim (M) - Nine months

Fake blood and spending cuts

ECONOMIC VIEW

PAUL WALLACE

Blood has been spilt, the axe-man has run amok. Yes, it's that time of year, when – if leaks of brutal cuts are to be believed – the perennial struggle between the Treasury and spending departments might as well be The Whitehall Chainsaw Massacre, with William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, cast as Butcher Bill.

This year, of course, there is an overriding need to emphasise the sheer scale of the gore and carnage. The audience the Government cares about in the run-up to the Budget is not voters but the financial markets. The imperative for the spin-doctors is to soften up the City for a giveaway budget. The way to do that is to stress the ferocious nature of the spending reductions in order to justify the tax cuts that have become the Tory party's version of manifest destiny. Cuts are now said to be £6bn rather than £3bn off the "control total", the Treasury's key measure of public spending.

Presentation is all in this most political of budgets. Eddie George, Kenneth Clarke's former huddy (until the Chancellor roughed him up over the summer), warned after last year's Budget that tax cuts could only be justified if there was an underlying improvement in the trend rate of economic growth.

There has been scant evidence of that in the past year. Instead, what the Bank, along with everyone else, has witnessed is an unexpected worsening in the state of the public finances. So far this year, the PSBR has actually deteriorated in comparison with last.

The underlying PSBR, which excludes privatisation proceeds, has fallen by £2bn, but this is less auspicious than it might seem for two reasons. The first is that privatisation revenues are forecast by the Treasury to be £3.5bn less this year than they were last year. The second concerns the treatment of the pri-



PAUL WALLACE

vatation of the rolling-stock companies. Remarkably, the sale of the Roscos, which raised a cool £1.8bn, is not treated by the Treasury as privatisation proceeds. Instead, it counts both this year and next towards the Department of Transport's budget, with the cycling baron, Sir George Young, the unlikely beneficiary.

The received wisdom about the deteriorating prospects in the PSBR is that the problem has risen essentially on the revenue side. Income tax has been running 1.6 per cent less than the June forecast of 9.4 per cent and VAT revenues have been run-

ning at little more than half the projected low inflation. While retail price inflation has risen this year to almost 4 per cent, the GDP deflator, which measures "home-grown" costs, principally earnings, has been rising at only 1 per cent – considerably less than the 3.25 per cent projected by the Treasury last year.

Goldman Sachs expects it to rise by about 2 per cent in the financial year as a whole. Once again this is a consequence of the flexible labour market. The GDP deflator has risen much less than expected for the second year running.

The stage looks set for a replay of the way in which unexpectedly low inflation turned an apparently tight spending round for 1994/95 – with the control total projected to fall by 1.4 per cent in real terms – into a comfortable one, with spending rising by about that amount.

mer. Although there had been a substantial rise in claims earlier this year, up from £4m to £20, this had begun to tail-off by the end of September.

Profits from general insurance in North America grew from £35m in the first nine months of 1994 to £38m this year, although this was, in part, based on higher investment income. Australia produced profits of £23m, up from £19m last year. The New Zealand operation has been sold.

With departments able to purchase the services they are providing more cheaply than the Treasury thought would be the case, the Chancellor will not have to dip too deeply into this year's £3bn reserve. Thus, he will be able to brandish cuts in public spending – the nominal cash totals – for this year and carry them forward to next year. Good for soundbites, but the picture in real terms – the only terms that matter – will be quite the reverse.

A further cause for scepticism is whether the control total is an appropriate gauge of public spending. What matters at the end of the day is total government spending. This includes debt interest and cyclically sensitive social security spending – unemployment benefit and income support. Since the control total was introduced, it has been growing considerably more slowly than the overall total, general government expenditure excluding privatisation proceeds.

A likely overrun of about £8bn on the PSBR makes it likely that this will continue, since at gilt yields of about 8 per cent, the additional annual £900m of interest, in addition, cyclically sensitive social security spending is proving remarkably cyclically insensitive. For example, it fell by only £250m in 1994/95 despite a downturn in unemployment that on usual Treasury assumptions would have led to a reduction of £1bn.

None of which will stop the Chancellor from cutting taxes by whatever he thinks he can get away with, justifying the bonanza by pointing to the huge chunks of future spending that have been hacked away. The account of hutchery will be precisely attuned to the needs of the City, but they should treat it, if not as The Whitehall Chainsaw Massacre, as Pulp Fiction. With capital projects certain to be axed and running costs set to be slashed, some of the blood on the floor will be real. But most will be fake.

The amount of butchery will be precisely attuned to the City's needs

ning at little more than half the projected low inflation. While retail price inflation has risen this year to almost 4 per cent, the GDP deflator, which measures "home-grown" costs, principally earnings, has been rising at only 1 per cent – considerably less than the 3.25 per cent projected by the Treasury last year.

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Diversification strategy pays off for CU

NIC CICUTTI

Commercial Union, one of the UK's top composite insurers, yesterday claimed its strategy of world-wide diversification in life and general insurance business was vindicated by a 16 per cent profit rise to £38m.

The company's profits rise for the first nine months of 1995 came despite poor performance in the regular premium business in the UK life operations ac-

counted for 44 per cent of world-wide premiums. Leading to a £64m profit rise to £164m. John Carter, chief executive, said yesterday: "Our operations outside the UK increased their contribution to 36 per cent of territorial operating profits, underlining the importance of our international spread of life and general insurance business. However, conditions for writing new annual premium business remain difficult in a number of markets,

including the UK, reflecting consumers' unwillingness to enter into long-term savings commitments."

Mr Carter blamed the fall in sales on a combination of the new disclosure regime in the UK, the lack of a "feelgood factor", plus the tail-off in public confidence in life and pensions products in the wake of the pensions mis-selling scandal.

He discounted the possibility of a massive rise in subsidence claims, following the warm sum-

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Losses mount at Millwall

Losses continue to mount at Millwall, with the first division club failing to make the progress it expected on generating extra revenues from non-football events at its new 20,000-seater stadium in south London. Turnover in the year to May declined from £5.6m to £4.3m and losses before tax rose from £119,000 to £584,000. The result would have been much worse but for doubled profits of £3.5m from transfer deals.

Operating losses were sharply higher at £3.5m, compared with £2.1m in 1993/94. Investors remained negative about the company's prospects, and the already depressed share price eased 0.25p to 3.5p.

0800 100 100

Freshers enrol for the course

Greg Wood on an initiative to enlighten students on the ways of the turf

Can Can Charlie and Captain Marmalade will never be household names, but racing may owe them a considerable debt none the less. As they fought out a stirring finish to the novice hurdle race at Kempton yesterday, dozens of students, many turf novices themselves, were gripped as the advantage swung one way and then another. Even the replay drew gasps and winces. If just two or three catch the racing habit as a result, Kempton's foresight in offering a special student package yesterday will have been richly rewarded.

Much is said about the need to attract new racegoers if the sport is to flourish. The large number of families attending this year's Sunday meetings has been encouraging, yet many courses fail to see beyond crèches and clowns as a way of introducing young people to the racing experience, which should, almost by definition, involve an occasional bet. The average five-year-old may enjoy an afternoon at the track, but then they are also likely to enjoy scribbling with felt-tip pens or playing hide-and-seek. Neither will necessarily become life-long passions.

Students, by contrast, "can take part in the sport as a betting event, it's the real thing" as Simon Marmalade, Kempton's public relations officer, pointed out yesterday. Just as importantly, they are also "the opinion-formers of the future". Almost 100 students were attracted by yesterday's concessions, which included admission for just 45p, exclusive use of the Thames Suite with a bar at stu-



Undergraduates work out how to supplement their grant and absorb the racing spirit at Kempton yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

dent-union prices and, in many cases, free travel to the course from as far away as Norwich. Cynics will point out that most students would walk barefoot to the North Pole if there was the promise of cheap beer when they arrived. Others might wonder how the sight of fivers being fed into the Thames Suite can be squared with claims of widespread student poverty. John Holmes, the president of the turf club at the University of East Anglia, which brought a 35-strong party yesterday, sees no contradiction.

"A week tomorrow I'm going on a demonstration about student hardship," Holmes said, "and many students experience serious hardship. But the expansion of higher education has involved people for whom money is not such a problem, and we're just talking about horsey Henrys."

Holmes, who used to appear in *Grange Hill*, cheerfully admits that the acting fees soon found their way to his local betting shop, and the repeat fees from the current re-runs are going the same way. Many others

in his party, though, are relative newcomers to racing. "Probably about two-thirds of them hadn't been racing before a similar student day at Newmarket a few weeks ago," he said. "But they enjoyed that and they've come along again today."

Yesterday's action was just as infectious. After the battle between Can Can Charlie and Captain Marmalade - in which the former regained the lead in the final stride - one student had backed the runner-up reported that he had still enjoyed

the run he had had for his money. He had been racing before only once, but had already learned that "races like that really get you going, shouting and screaming."

There was something to cheer in the novice chase, too, in which Jamie Osborne produced one of the best rides even of his distinguished career. Myland, a faller on his only previous start over fences, did his best to unsettle Osborne at the ninth, and then blundered so badly at the 13th that his rider was left clinging, strapping, to his neck.

Myland lost at least 25 lengths, and when Miracle Man, the odds-on favourite, approached the penultimate fence well clear, his backers were counting their money. Another miracle man, though, was about to have his say. Osborne brought Myland with an irresistible run to catch the leader at the last and win going away.

If his performance did not convert at least a few of the students to the pleasures of the turf, it might be wise to check their vital signs.

WINCANTON

HYPERION
1.30 Little Hooligan
2.00 Ottawa
2.30 Romney Creek (nb)
3.00 See More Business
3.30 Altrak
4.00 Cheryls Lad

GOING: Good.
■ Right-hand, galloping course. Run-in of 200 yds.
■ Course is NE of town on B3016. Templecombe station (service from London Waterloo) 4m. ADMISSION: Members £12.50 (Junior Members, 17 to 22 years, £4.50; Non-members, £10.00; Children 10 and under, £2.50; 5 and under, £1.00). CARRIAGE: 10p.
■ LEADING TRAINERS WITH WINNERS: M Pipe - 35 winners from 123 runners gives a success ratio of 28.4% and a profit to a £1 level stake of £25.68; Mrs A Phipps - 21 winners from 107 runners, 14.05%; £55.73; 4 winners, 15 winners, 86 runners, 17.9%; £41.04; 11 winners, 100 runners, 14.0%; £42.75.
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: R Drury - 31 winners, 143 rides, 21.2%; £47.58; J Osborne - 11 winners, 60 rides, 18.3%; £14.42; M Phipps - 11 winners, 110 rides, 1.0%; £55.73; R Drury - 10 winners, 86 rides, 11.0%; £51.00.
■ WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
■ LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Take Chances (2.30) has been seen 111 miles by Mrs N Duffield from Amman, Devon.

1.30 UWESU STILL STANDING NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,500 added 2m Penalty Value £2,040
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

2.00 CHARD NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £3,765
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

2.30 HAMILTON LITESTAT HURDLE (CLASS D) £7,500 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £5,329
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

3.00 GREAT WESTERN NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS C) £5,000 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £3,765
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

3.30 CERNIE ABBEY NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS F) £5,000 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £3,765
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

4.00 WESSEX HURDLE (CLASS C) £5,000 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £3,765
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

4.30 BRITISH GYPSUM CLUB 2000 FILLIES SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £3,250 2YO 7f
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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7. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

5.00 TRENT APPRENTICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £4,400 added 5f
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
5. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
6. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
7. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

5.30 RIVER IDLE CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) (DIV IV) £3,150 added 1m
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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8. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
9. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

6.00 RIVER IDLE CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) (DIV IV) £3,150 added 1m
1. 047-138 MUCKY SOUTHERN (4) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
2. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
3. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
4. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
5. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley
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10. 052-225 DUNDEE BOY (5) (M Pipe) 6.11.12... D Bradley

Merry Gale back on track

Klairon Davis and Merry Gale, two of Ireland's top chasers, meet in the Grade Three Tipperary Racebook Chase today. The Jim Draper-trained Merry Gale, fourth in the Cheltenham Gold Cup last season, will be ridden by Richard Donnelly on his first outing since his victory in the Martell Cup at Aintree last April.

Klairon Davis, Arthur Moore's Arkle Trophy winner, is also appearing for the first time this season in the £161,000 two-mile contest.

land's leading Champion Hurdle hopes, Hotel Minella, may be sent chasing later this season. The Aidan O'Brien-trained eight-year-old is quoted as short as 14-1 for the Cheltenham race with Ladbrokes after four wins in novice company last season. But O'Brien's wife, Anne Marie, said: "He might be going chasing. He has been schooled and he's a super jumper of fences."

SOUTHWELL

HYPERION
12.20 H'ronetta 12.50 Pine Ridge Lad 2.20 Double Diamond 1.50 Sandrom Denim 1.20 La Briet 2.50 Present Situation 3.20 Vera's First 3.50 La Petite Fusee

GOING: Standard. DRAWDRAWN: Low.
STALLS: 7f, 1m & 1.5m - inside out - outside.
■ Flooded surface. R - Road sharp, oval course.
■ Course is 1/2 m W of town. Ballisodune Junction adjoins course.
ADMISSION: Club £12; Non-club £15. Members of course's Diamond Club £1, under-16s £1.50.

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WARWICK

HYPERION
12.40 Reverend Brown 1.10 Zephyrus 1.40 Cobb Gata 2.10 Ardmorey Chief 2.40 Nana 3.10 ONE-SEVENFOUR (nap) 3.40 Tejanio Gold

GOING: Good.
■ Right-hand, galloping course. Run-in of 240 yards.
■ Course is W of city on B4095. Railway station at Warwick (Jm) and Leamington Spa (Jm). ADMISSION: Club £12 (10 to 24 years-old £6); Non-club £5; Concessions £3. CARRIAGE: 10p.

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HYPERION

Martin Johnson in Pretoria finds England's chairman unmoved by the emotion of a historic Test

The underlying suspicion in Illingworth's mind was that the

What Illingworth feels uncomfortable about, thrifty soul that he is, is the prospect of De-

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What Illingworth feels uncomfortable about, thrifty soul that he is, is the prospect of De-



M R Ramsay	40.1	4	130	0
R A Smith	4.9	2	6	0
A J Stewart	3.2	0	13	0
G P Thorpe	8.0	2	15	0

0000000000

S Pollock has yet to play Test cricket

ing from the starting stalls like a greyhound with two broken legs.

Pakistan of ball-tampering in 1992, has been invited on a lecture tour of the country.

Tennis

■ Steffi Graf, the joint world No 1 with Monica Seles, began her challenge in the WTA Tour Championships with a 6-2, 6-2 first-round win over Amanda Coetzer in New York yesterday.

EMERALD -BATTING										MOUNTAIN VIEW -BATTING										
AB	R	H	NO	HR	1B	2B	3B	4B	5B	AB	R	H	NO	HR	1B	2B	3B	4B	5B	
G A Smith	27	4	1	NO	1	0	0	0	0	A J Smith	20	2	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
R P Thomas	21	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	E W Smith	19	2	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
G A Hirsch	21	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	W J Murphy	22	4	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
A C Hirsch	21	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	A C Hirsch	30	3	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
J J Starnes	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E W Smith	26	3	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
G A Hirsch	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	A C Hirsch	22	4	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
R C Thomas	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	A C Hirsch	22	4	1	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Information on your
the 24-hour hotline num-
ber is available for \$4.99
in advance or \$5.99 on the door.
Information on new low airfare
packages (from \$325) to Keystone and
Breckenridge in Colorado, call 800-
891-7772.

Sexton is convinced of Fowler's maturity

Football

Robbie Fowler's progression to the senior England squad moved a step closer after another impressive display by the Liverpool striker.

Fowler's disappointment at the Under-21's exit from their European Championship, despite Tuesday night's 2-1 victory over Austria, could be eased with a part in Terry Venables' plans for the main event next summer.

The 20-year-old scored England's first goal and set up Neil Shipperley for the winner at the Riverside Stadium, earning him the plaudits of the Under-21 head coach, Dave Sexton.

"If you put him in the side, he would not be out of place," Sexton said. "Anyone with his kind of talent must have a chance. I saw him play against Manchester United when he got both Liverpool's goals. His second was a brilliant finish. He is capable of that, yet is still a young man."

Fowler, sent off in the victory over Austria last year, demonstrated there is more to his game than scoring (last night's goal was his 13th of the season) with a superb flick to supply the pass for England's decisive goal from Shipperley.

"The lay-off he did for our second goal was tremendous," said Sexton, whose side responded after Fowler's opener was quickly cancelled out by a 30-yard drive from Harald Cerny.

Fowler formed an effective partnership with Shipperley, while there were also commendable displays from the Newcastle players, Robbie Elliott and Steve Watson.

However, England ended their qualifying campaign one point behind Portugal, who progressed to the quarter-finals

with a 3-1 defeat of the Republic of Ireland.

When they next gather, they could be under new stewardship, with Sexton suggesting that after 20 years in charge, apart from a three-year break in the early 1980s, he might now make way for his assistant Ray Wilkins. "Nothing has been said so far," said Sexton, who is not under contract for the part-time post. "I am happy to do the job, especially at my age. But if they want a younger man to come in - if they want Ray to take over - then I am quite happy to step down at any time."

Maurice Setters, the manager of the Republic of Ireland Under-21 team, will not lodge an official protest against the referee whose controversial decision helped produce a result which put England's youngsters out of the championship. Portugal beat the Republic 3-1 in Leiria to finish top of their qualifying group and edge out second-placed England.

But their crucial second goal, 24 minutes from the end, came when the Spurs defender Owen Coll was lying injured. Even when the ball went out of play for a throw-in, the Croatian referee, Mateo Beusan, refused to let Coll be treated or substituted. Within seconds, the Portuguese substitute Sergio Conceicao scored.

Setters, the former Manchester United and West Bromwich defender, said: "It was clear the referee should have stopped it and perhaps there is a case for us protesting."

"But I don't think we want to take it that far. I was only thinking of my own team, not England, but Portugal were a better side than us and deserved to win. Certainly, though, the referee didn't do us any favours."

Brawl at Blues game in Italy

GUY HODGSON

The coach of an Italian Serie B club was allegedly head-butted by a Birmingham City player after a fiery Anglo-Italian Cup match in Italy yesterday.

Ancona's Massimo Cacciatori reportedly needed hospital treatment after the incident during a dressing-room brawl between players and officials after the game, which Birmingham won 2-1. A Blues director, David Gold, had objects thrown at him and home fans tried to attack visiting supporters.

City's physio, Neil McDiarmid, was said to have been pushed by Ancona's Davide Pentoni as he tried to treat Paul Tait for a head injury and, at one point, Cacciatori allegedly grabbed Birmingham's Ricky Otto by the throat. Afterwards a group of Ancona fans hurled stones at a bus taking Birmingham supporters to the airport.

Leeds United have become embroiled in more transfer confusion. After the saga of their fruitless pursuit of Colombia's Faustino Asprilla, the chance of Sweden's Tomas Brodin arriving at Elland Road has diminished.

On Tuesday Leeds' managing director, Bill Fotherby, described the £4.5m Brodin deal as a matter of "dotting the i's and crossing the t's" but Parma, for whom Asprilla also plays, said it was anything but settled yesterday.

Revealing that Brodin and Leeds had failed to agree a contract, a spokesman for the Italian club said: "We expect Brodin back in Parma later this week. He's rejoining our roster. Parma and Leeds agreed terms for Brodin's move but the player himself failed to reach an agreement with Leeds. At the moment the talks are blocked if not totally broken down."

That brought surprise in Yorkshire. "It's all in limbo because Tomas is playing for Sweden in the European Championship," Leslie Silver, the Elland Road chairman, said last night. "As far as we are concerned he is flying here to Leeds tomorrow."

Wolverhampton Wanderers will "politely reject" an application for the vacant manager's position if they receive one from Brian Clough. On Tuesday the former Nottingham Forest manager said he would like to succeed Graham Taylor at Molineux, but a club spokesman said yesterday: "We are assuming Brian had his tongue in his cheek when he made these remarks."

A phone poll organised by the Wolverhampton Express and Star revealed that the Cardiff manager, Kenny Hibbitt, would be the most popular appointment. The former Wolves player received 23 per cent of the votes with Chris Waddle second on 20.

Manchester United must defend a second accusation of poaching after the FA charged them with making an alleged illegal approach to 16-year-old David Brown while he was with Oldham as an associate schoolboy. They face a similar charge after Arsenal claimed they enticed away Matthew Wicks. Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said: "We are quite happy to answer the charge. We have nothing at all to feel guilty about."

Striker Gary Penrice has rejoined Watford from Queen's Park Rangers for £300,000, while Torquay, bottom of the Third Division, have named Eddie May, once in charge at Cardiff, as their new manager.



Knee-bends: Nick Anderson (left), the Orlando Magic guard, steals the ball from Michael Jordan, the Chicago Bulls guard, at the Orlando Arena yesterday. Orlando came out on top 94-88 in a match between the two leading contenders for the Eastern Conference title. Photograph: AP

Daily confident of Scotland's chances

Christian Daily wants to extend his world record of Under-21 caps to thirty-something, and insists Scotland have nothing to fear in the last eight of the European Under-21 Championship.

The Dundee United player collected his 30th cap at Under-21 level as Tommy Craig's side chalked up a seventh successive win in Group Eight with Tuesday's 1-0 victory over San Marino.

Scotland go into today's quarter-final draw with the likes of Spain, Portugal, France, Germany and Hungary among the possible opponents in a two-legged tie next spring.

"With the talent we have available at the moment we should go anywhere with a bit of confidence," Daily said.

"I've looked at the results and you realise that nations like Russia and Greece, who we beat home and away, Holland and England have not made it."

"There are so soft touches, but we have beaten Portugal and France in recent years and this level and with the squad that Tommy Craig has we know we will attack wherever we go."

Away wins in Greece and Russia were the key factors in guiding Scotland through after a shock defeat in the first game in Finland last autumn.

Daily missed out on the quarter-finals and semi-finals four years ago when Scotland beat Germany but lost out to Sweden. Now he hopes to add to his cap record before being ineligible.

"I was injured around that time, the only period I've been out of the Under-21 squad," he said. "I'm delighted to have won 30 caps and I'd like to get it to 32 in the quarter-finals - and then take it from there."

"There is going to be a lot of competition for places because Tommy has used a number of players already and everyone wants to stay involved."

Craig, in fact, has selected 43 youngsters for squads and used 34 in the campaign. Oldham's Scott McNiven won his first cap at Firhill but it was soured by a red card for two bookings 33 minutes after coming on at half-time. In the end it took a Vittorio Valentini own goal to defeat the all-out defence of San Marino.

England beat Pakistan as Jansher rests

England reached the quarter-finals of the Men's World Team Championship in Cairo yesterday with the help of their opponents, the defending champions Pakistan, who chose this final qualifying match to rest the world champion, Jansher Khan.

Pakistan had played Jansher in every previous qualifying match, sometimes without necessity after a stressful World Open campaign in Cyprus last week. "It is too many matches," Jansher complained. "My feet hurt with blisters and my bones ache."

His replacement, Zarak Jahan, was no match for the Yorkshireman Simon Parkes. Del Harris, a World Open finalist last week, took only 42 minutes to beat Mir Zaman Gul but Chris Walker, another Essex player, lost in 64 minutes to Zubair Jahan. The result pits England against Canada, who defeated Ireland 2-1.

Results, Sporting Digest, page 28

Stevens has Wembley in his sights

Snooker

Matthew Stevens put last year's Benson and Hedges Championship semi-final defeat behind him last night when he took the title in Edinburgh. The 18-year-old overwhelmed Paul McPhillips 9-3 to claim the £5,000 first prize and a trip to Wembley next February for the Benson and Hedges Masters.

Fittingly, he rounded off a memorable nine days with a clearance of 122 to clinch the trophy.

"I am thrilled to have won my first major title so early in my career," said Stevens, who has moved to 57th on the provisional world rankings from a starting point this season of 236.

Stevens, from Carmarthen, was never in trouble after a ferocious first session in which he clinched six of the opening seven frames. McPhillips, the world No 64 from Glasgow, won two of the first three frames of the final session, but the Scot admitted: "There was too much of a leeway to make up."

Matthew is a great player and in a couple of years could easily get into the top 16."

Stevens, who meets Steve James in the UK Championship later this week, will face Terry Griffiths on his Wembley debut in the new year. He said: "I have known I've got the ability to win tournaments, it's just a question of getting some consistency in my game."

Benson and Hedges Championship (Edinburgh) Final: M Stevens (W) 9-3 P McPhillips (S) 9-3. Frame scores: (Stevens first) 68-67 68-22 114-7 88-43 77-1 66-55 3-54 14-68 81-33 39-72 96-27 129 111 (break) 0.

Big men win Nemeth's tactical battle

Basketball

England secured their first win in Group B of the European Championship last night with a 75-72 victory over Portugal in Ponte Sor, thanks to a 10-minute scoring spree either side of half-time.

With England trailing 31-25, the coach, Laszlo Nemeth, decided to switch to his big men - and it worked. They led by six at the half-way stage after a scoring run of 13-1, which included a three-pointer on the buzzer by the captain, Peter Stillebury, who was making his 100th appearance for his country.

The pressure continued after the break with an 11-2 burst for England to lead 49-34 with four minutes gone. But the Portuguese inched their way back and with just under three minutes left they reduced the deficit to six points. However, England's guard, Karl Brown, rallied with a three-point play to make sure of the vital win.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP Semi-final round (Ponte Sor): Portugal 72 (Rako 15, Machado 11, Sales 10, Rousten 10) England 75 (Stillebury 17, Brown 16, Huggins 25).

England give chase to runaway Wales

Bowls

Wales could only pick up one point from yesterday morning's women's matches, but still held a four-point lead in the European Indoor Team Championship in Jersey.

Their solitary point came in the triples, in which Val Howell, Ann Dainton and Rita Jones had to settle for an 11-11 draw with Scotland's Kate Adams, Jeanette Conlan and Joyce Lindores. The Welsh trio led 10-3 after nine ends, but the Scots rallied and forced their share of the spoils with a final-end single.

In the pairs, Wales' Cynthia Morgan and Julie Davies lost for the first time - 20-15 to Ireland's Muriel Wilkinson and Margaret Johnston. Wales led 7-2 after six ends, but then failed to score on any of the next eight ends with Ireland going 13-7 up on their way to victory.

England closed the gap on Wales in second place when their pairs team, Jayne Roylance and Mary Price, beat Scotland's

Sarah Gourlay and Jan Woodley 28-14 thanks largely to two counts of six.

England failed to make up even more ground on the Welsh when Edna Bessell's triples side lost 17-13 to the Jersey side skipped by Jean Lowery. The home trio trailed 12-10 with just three ends to play but counts of four and three gave them victory.

There was no such mistake by the men as England claimed wins in the opening singles and fours. The World indoor champion, Andy Thomson, set the ball rolling when he beat former United Kingdom champion, Stephen Rees, in four sets.

England moved in touch of Wales when David Holt, Greg Harlow, Gary Smith and Tony Allcock took the fours points, leading from the opening end to beat Robert Weale's Welsh rink 18-14.

Scotland stayed in third place when they picked up a maximum three points from Graham Robertson's 7-4 7-3 7-6 win over Guernsey's John Quirepel. Results, Sporting Digest, page 28

YESTERDAY'S FOOTBALL RESULTS

European Championship Group One		Group Eight	
Slovakia (1) 0	Romania (0) 2	Russia (1) 1	Finland (1) 1
Hag 68	Murtescu 83	Rachimov 40	Suominen 45
At Vasporty stadium, Moscow		Kuyshov 70	4,000
Group Two		Anglo-Italian Cup Group A	
Cyprus (1) 1	Belgium (0) 1	Ancona (0) 1	Birmingham (2) 2
Agimicou 18	De Blae 66	Sieja 52	Edwards 27
8,000		Tentori 33	
At Taksim stadium, Larnaca; Cyprus's Mirko Charalambous sent off, 20		EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP Group One (Bologna) France 2 beat 0 France qualified for quarter-finals. Group Two (Larnaca): Cyprus 1 Belgium 1. Spain qualify. Group Four (Pistoia) Italy 0 Lithuania 0. Italy qualify.	
Group Seven		EUROPEAN INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Wimbledon 1 Norwich 1. Second Division: Swansea 0 Bournemouth 2.	
Albania (1) 1	Wales (1) 1		
Kurtaj per 5	Ponting 41		
5,000			
At Qemal Stafa stadium, Tirana			

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SPORT

Battling display pleases Gould

Albania
Wales1
1

Bobby Gould, the manager of Wales, praised his side for their passion and heart after they had ended their ill-starred European Championship campaign with a hard-earned draw in Tirana.

Wales recovered from conceding a fifth-minute penalty, converted by Sokol Kushta, to draw level before half-time through Mack Pembroke's second international goal. "They did get at us at the start of the second half but we've got to take a great deal of heart from the way we played," Gould said. "Everybody gave their best. Although I wanted to win, because I'm a winner, it's a sound result."

Pembroke, the 24-year-old Sheffield Wednesday midfielder, gave a non-stop display and was on hand to take advantage of a piece of brilliance by Ryan Giggs to head home just before the break. Southall saw both his post and bar struck but, as the game wore on, the Welsh looked the better-balanced team and could have claimed a win.

Gould must have been delighted at the final whistle as his patched-up side, with Gareth Taylor making his debut and Robbie Savage and John Robins coming off the bench near the end to earn their first caps, held on to earn a draw.

Inside the first minute Neville Southall was beaten by a free-kick from Ledió Pano which crashed against his upright, and four minutes later the Welsh were behind. The Wolves defender Eric Young, back in the Welsh team after a 20-month

absence, allowed the speedy Kushta to nip past him and race into the box, and his only response was a scything foul.

The Israeli referee pointed straight to the penalty spot and Young must have been relieved not to receive a card of any colour for what appeared a professional foul. Kushta got up to take the kick himself and although his first successful conversion was ruled out for encroachment, he made no mistake second time around, sending Southall the wrong way.

Wales battled back well, though, and equalised in the 41st minute. The goal owed much to the quick thinking of Dean Saunders, who took a throw down the left, but even more to the class of Giggs. The Manchester United man raced into space before picking out Pembroke's perfectly timed run and the midfielder headed home confidently.

Two minutes into the second half Southall was just a spectator as an acrobatic volley from Altin Rrakli thumped against the bar, but after that Wales recovered their poise. They had two goals disallowed, while Giggs missed two good chances. The draw ensured Wales finished above the Albanians in fourth place in Group Seven, thanks to their win in Cardiff last September.

ALBANIA: Shkumbin Zogaj, Shkurti, Duro (Miron, 84), Vata, Lleshi, Kushta (Basha, 89), Mado, Bogo (Zola, 79), Rrakli, Pano.
WALES: Southall (Forest), Jenkins (Huddersfield), Bowen (Norwich), Phillips (Nottingham Forest), Young (Wolves), Melville (Swindon), Taylor (Crystal Palace), Pembroke (Sheffield Wednesday), Saunders (Gillingham), Hughes (Aston), Giggs (Manchester United), Substitutes: Savage (Cardiff), Hughes, 63; Robins (Cheltenham) for Taylor, 84.
Referee: D. Sini (Israel).

Raymond Illingworth spent most of the day engaged in the not unfamiliar pursuit of having a grumble, largely about the use of a watering can

Martin Johnson, page 30



Dean Saunders, the Wales striker (right), takes on Albania's Sokol Kushta during yesterday's 1-1 draw in Tirana

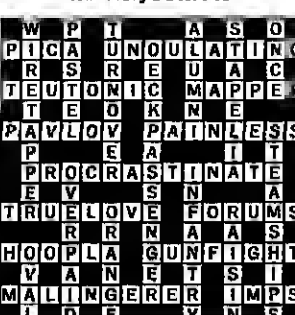
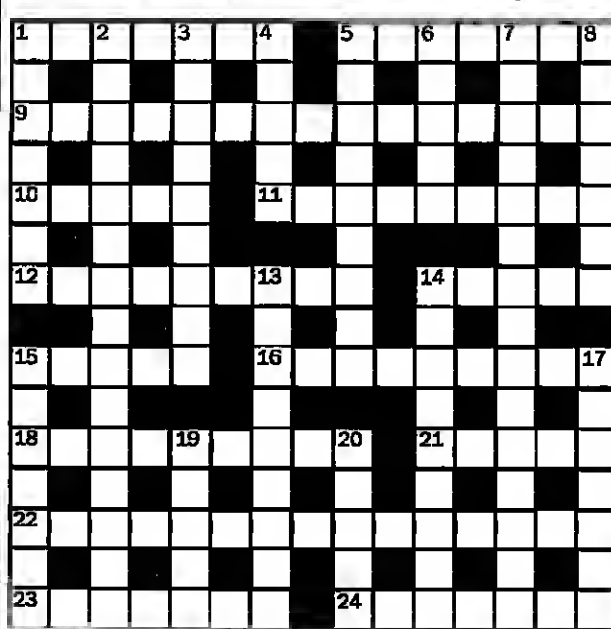
Photograph: Armando Babin/AP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2833, Thursday 16 November

By Hellebor

Wednesday's Solution



ACROSS

- 1 Instrument that's fashioned from half-cast steel (7)
- 5 A load of redundancies? (7)
- 9 Rashly claim the Holy Grail? Not he, according to the Bible! (15)
- 10 Band of the month, with a cult alien following (5)
- 11 Bird's choleric note (9)
- 12 Food served by motorway junction? (9)
- 14 Not giving much away? Sounds like some of the KGB (5)
- 15 Shrink from a second-class hospital taking on operations research (5)
- 16 Notes Roman made: all Greek to me! (9)
- 18 Finest changes in Chairman's political programme (9)

DOWN

- 21 Angry and well-informed group (5)
- 22 To calm energetic rogue, charge may use such power (7-8)
- 23 A small unleavened loaf? No, no little girl! (7)
- 24 Most of pudding repeats on Duke, like some salads (7)

- 6 Gets ready to shoot male birds (5)
- 7 Arranging limbs across one's chest so old man's finger mends (7,4,4)
- 8 Allegiance of king, say, who changes sides at the start (7)
- 13 Monument to Dr Diamond? (9)
- 14 Boil most of hot lunch in dinner, and live! (9)
- 15 Lammis pie (northern). There's one going begging here (4-3)
- 17 This should neutralise an insect sting (7)
- 19 Fast ships (5)
- 20 Hit (oldie) that's perpetuated in *Grease* (5)

Tottenham and Brentford warned

What was supposed to be just a training match turned ugly for Tottenham and Brentford, who have both been warned by the Football Association after the game was abandoned following a refereeing controversy.

The Brentford manager, Dave Webb, had believed that the game - staged by Tottenham on 5 October - was to be an informal affair. Webb, therefore, was surprised when a recognised referee and linesmen arrived to take charge - and he was even more unhappy when the Brentford defender, Brian Statham, was shown a yellow card.

"There was quite a bit of discussion going on with the referee during the game to determine whether or not Statham would be reported," said an FA official.

"Webb just wanted to clarify the situation and Tottenham's

Chris Hughton also became involved. In the end the referee decided to abandon the game during the second half."

That led to both clubs being charged by the FA. "Having given the correspondence due consideration and following a plea in mitigation made by the manager of Brentford, the members were satisfied that Tottenham and Brentford were guilty of misconduct under rule 26a. It was decided both clubs be warned as to their future conduct," the FA said.

Statham, an England Under-21 defender and former Tottenham player, has since been suspended for reaching 21 points with the "friendly" caution counting towards his tally.

Also in trouble is the Dumbarton goalkeeper, Ian McFarlane, for being sent off twice in the same match. McFarlane re-

ceived his marching orders during Saturday's First Division match against Airdrie. The club has been shocked to discover that he was red-carded twice for the same incident involving Airdrie's Jim McIntyre.

A Scottish Football Association official has confirmed that, according to the report from the referee, George Clyde, the player was sent off for head-butting and received an additional red card for a punch. That carries an automatic two-match ban and 24 penalty points which brings a third game suspension.

In addition, both McFarlane and his club are being asked to comment on the incident before Monday's meeting of the SFA's disciplinary committee.

In Italy, the Sampdoria captain, Roberto Mancini, was banned for five matches yesterday for throwing a tantrum

during his club's 0-0 draw against Lazio on 5 November. The stiff suspension was accompanied by a fine of 8m lire (£3,300) - 5m (£2,050) for dissent and 3m lire (£1,250) for faking a foul. Sampdoria were also fined 30m lire (£12,500) as a result of the incident.

Mancini's notoriously short fuse was in evidence against Internazionale when the goalkeeper, Gianluca Pagliuca, appeared to bring him down in the area. He exploded when the referee not only refused to award a penalty but booked him for faking a foul.

Mancini threw down his captain's armband and appealed to the Sampdoria coach, Sven Goran Eriksson, to substitute him but had his request turned down. He was then sent off for insulting the referee.

Son takes father's ashes to matches

Few teams can claim fans as die-hard as those at the Spanish club, Real Betis, who boast a late club member whose son has remained faithful to the man's final wishes and takes his ashes to each game - in a used milk carton.

Although the man died last year, the son has also renewed his father's membership of the Seville club for this season which entitles the milk carton containing the ashes to a seat in the Benito Villamarín stadium, according to one of the club's directors, Jose Antonio Gonzalez Flores.

However, not all has been a bed of roses for the dead man whose identity, and that of his son, have not been divulged.

According to the daily paper, *El Mundo*, although the son had no problem renewing the dead man's membership, he initially tried to take the ashes to the games in a glass container - a grave mistake.

After several weeks he was stopped by security officials who claimed the container constituted a dangerous object and as such was prohibited.

It was then, *El Mundo* said, that the son got the idea of placing the ashes in a one-litre, used Tetra Brik milk carton, a decision which met with the approval of the club's security officials.

Betis, one of Spain's oldest clubs, lie eighth in the 22-team First Division and are through to the last 16 of the Uefa Cup.

The club have 31,500 club members, most of whom are believed to be alive.

Gascoigne faces further investigation

GUY HODGSON

Paul Gascoigne, who spoke despairingly of being in a permanent spotlight this week, had more attention of the unwanted kind yesterday when the Scottish Football Association announced they are to interview him about Rangers' Scottish Premier Division match against Aberdeen last Saturday.

Strathclyde Police are investigating "incidents which allegedly occurred" during a 1-1

draw at Ibrox, but the SFA are pursuing their disciplinary procedures after receiving the report from the referee supervisor, Don McVicar, who watched from the stand. The match official, John Rowbotham, took no action over a series of incidents concerning Gascoigne and a late fracas involving John Brown and Alan McLaren, of Rangers, and Aberdeen's Billy Dodds. Those four players have been asked for their comments, which will be presented to the SFA's disciplinary committee next Monday.

"As a result of the contents of that report, we are writing to Rangers and Aberdeen for the comments of those players referred to in a series of incidents," an SFA spokesman said. "It is in connection with the conduct of the players Gascoigne, Brown and McLaren of Rangers and Aberdeen's Dodds."

"We have asked for those comments to be returned in time for consideration at the next disciplinary committee meeting on Monday."

Rowbotham's report gave

confirmation of the four bookings he made during Saturday's game, but made no reference to the other incidents. However, it was on the strength of a supervisor's report in May 1994 that the former Rangers striker Duncan Ferguson was handed a 12-match suspension he will serve once he completes a three-month jail sentence.

Two other players had already been asked to supply their comments to the meeting on incidents not punished by referees. Alan Lawrence, of Hearts, has been asked to explain an alleged elbowing offence on Rangers' Craig Moore, and Sean Sweeney, of Airdrie, for an alleged kick at Dundee's Morten Wieghorst.

A WRITER



The MALT



The MACALLAN

INSISTS UPON COSTLY 'GOLDEN'

PROMISE: BARLEY TO ENDOW IT

WITH THE SINGULARLY SMOOTH,

PRIZE-WINNING TASTE THAT

MAKES IT The MALT

Handwritten text in a box: 10/11/95